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ABSTRACT

The focus of the articles in this journal issue is helping students write for real audiences. The document contains the following articles: "Real Audiences: The Only Kind We Write For" (Margaret Queenan); "A Literary Magazine for Middle Grades" (Anthony R. Angelo and Marie-Jeanne Laurent); "Rewarding Understanding and Warmth" (Peter M. Ashe); "Journalizing Journalism" (Carol J. Balvanz); "Biography Partners" (Dorothy Francis and Joan E. Shea); "Emit: A Class Project" (John Azrak); "Using Letter Writing in the Classroom" (Thomas Patrick Fitzgerald and Kathleen Witthoft Byrne); "Our Town" (J. P. Rhinesmith); "Student Publishing Opportunities" (Helen Clara Lee); "Interdisciplinary Writing in the Elementary School" (Katherine Jones Loheyde); "Teachers Are Real, Too" (Alan C. Purves); "Generating Excitement through Writing to a Favorite Author" (Anne B. Pfeiffer); "Increasing the Reality of Audiences in Classrooms" (Donald A. McAndrew); "Book Critics Apply Here!" (Barbara Leigh Laurain); "Letters Create Audience Awareness" (Michael J. Melerski); "Peer Conferencing to Teach Audience" (Kathryn Chesley); "Writing a Corporate Style Manual" (Stephen T. Moskey and Mark N. O'Brien); "Lou Grant Died for Our Sins" (James W. Penha); "Writing for Professional Journals: Preservice Training" (Philip M. Anderson); "A Pragmatic Approach to Advanced Composition" (John M. Roderick); "From Martians to Ice Cream: Students' Journal Writing Ideas" (Barbara Leonard Warren); "Organizing and Publishing a High School Literary Magazine" (Leta W. Marks); "Editing Tips for Real Audience Writing" (Ralph L. Corrigan, Jr.); "I Read It in the Local Paper" (Mary Ann Link); "Writing for Peers" (Mary Hills Kuck); and "Audiences for Student Poetry" (Barbara Meyers). This issue also includes 21 paperback reviews. (EL)

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WRITING FOR REAL AUDIENCES

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CONNECTICUT ENGLISH JOURNAL

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Associate Editor: Nancy Rabianski-Carriuolo

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WRITING FOR REAL AUDIENCES

The Connecticut English Journal is published in the fall and spring by the Connecticut Council of Teachers of English. Subscription is included in the annual membership dues ($15.00) which should be sent to CCTE, P.O. Box 2211, Enfield, CT 06082. For single copies of this issue, write to the editor and enclose a check for $3.75 made out to CCTE.

Materials for publication and all communications regarding the journal should be sent to the editor: Diane P. Shugert, Box 124, Middle Haddam, CT 06456. CEJ solicits manuscripts related to themes announced in the "Call for Manuscripts," elsewhere in this issue.

PREFACE

"Why do we have to learn all this stuff, anyway?" The easiest question for the student to ask and the hardest for the teacher to answer. Twenty-five years ago my seventh grade social studies students asked it about a unit on local elections; twenty years ago senior honors students asked it about English poetry; three years ago my ninth graders asked it about reading books and writing book reviews; this semester my college technical writing students wanted an answer. When we require students to undertake change (as we do each time we ask them to learn), when the change involves students' concentration, hard work, and continuous effort (as writing does), we should have a better answer than, "Because I say so."

The articles in this issue of CEJ reveal the best answer, "Because it is so." The students discover the answer for themselves each time they write for a real audience. Writers must work so that readers will understand what the writers have written. The process that begins, perhaps, when a baby smiles and a mother smiles back is extended through mastery of a great cultural invention: the written word. Teacher and students work together so that students know how to use that invention to command society's resources. Whenever students see that readers have understood, have learned or laughed, have been informed or persuaded, students discover the value of their writing.

Letters, journals, handbooks, literary magazines--all those and more have been written by students described in these articles. To the teachers who have written to share these successes with us, I give a reader's--as well as an editor's--sincere thanks. This issue is the last, also, for which Donald Gallo will serve as book review editor. Don has been chosen by NCTE to edit the new edition of Books for You. Nancy Rabianski-Carriuolo will take Don's place with the CEJ paperback reviews. Thanks to both of them and to Doris Hagearty of the Secretarial Service of Newington and Dave Farnsworth of Curry Copy Center in Newington for getting this issue into readable condition.

Diane Stuart

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Real Audiences: The Only Kind We Write For

Margaret Queenan

A real audience is the only kind my students and I write for. Before we write we decide who our audience will be: local newspaper, Board of Education, PTA in order to persuade an influential board to our opinion, children in the local hospital, old people in the rest home, relatives around the family table for whom we produce a holiday memories book, students who will be using the Career Center after us for whom we research a career, the study body and faculty for whom we create a bulletin board of remembrances of each teacher's classroom. (This last writing is guaranteed an audience. I even saw one teacher spirit away his most memorable class from the board.)

Whether the student is published on the bulletin board or read in a school or national magazine, writing for a real and specific audience does two things:

1) It governs the tone and, consequently, the choice of words, style, content, examples, and even the theme of the work. The tone of a diary written for family members is liable to be less personal, the content less likely to reveal the author than the diary directed to a Children's Ward. We writers sometimes feel more comfortable when our confidante lives far away. By protectively coating the words that will be read by those close to us, we ward off criticism, but we also prevent feedback.

2) Writing for a real audience provides the author with human contact both after the fact and during the act of writing. Of course, the editor and later the reader come mind to mind with a writer's ideas; but before that, during the act of writing, the writer comes mind to mind with the reader as critic and the reader as soulmate. What writer doesn't see his reader as jurist in a box, head shaking at a misplaced modifier? And what writer doesn't smile back at his reader as they watch an idea change from an amorphous lump to a shaped and pounding form beating out a rhythm for both of them? This must have been the communion that Whitman felt when he addressed readers yet to be born and tells us (Tense changed on purpose) not to be too certain but that he is with us.

Students need communion, feedback. Last year one of my eighth grade groups was formally debating replacing teachers with computers. The students cited as a benefit the pleasurable sound the computer makes when the student makes the correct choice. Students crave feedback, and writing for a real audience is one way that we can assure

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that the feedback is accompanied by human contact. Whether it's a hundred twenty-seven year delayed writer-to-reader communion between Whitman and his reader or a few weeks/months delayed reader-to-writer contact as our work is interpreted and responded to by a contemporary reader, there is real human contact involved in writing for a real audience. Every student needs it; every teacher has an obligation to provide it.

I can't think of a writing project that shouldn't be directed toward real readers. Here are a few assignments that have accompanied that purpose for me:

Letter to Persuade: First, choose a problem, the resolution of which will profoundly affect your future. Then write a proposition that if carried out could resolve the problem. Select a partner to debate with and a team to debate against. Together, research your topic, share information, interview experts, read reference materials. On index cards take notes that prove that the proposition is/is not needed, practical, desirable. Write an essay from your opponent's point of view attacking your point of view. Now you're ready to debate. Whether you win or lose, write a letter to a person whose opinion can influence the outcome of your proposal. Persuade this person to your point of view. Show that your proposal is needed, that it is practical, that it is desirable. Remember that you have sifted through both sides of the topic. Make your reader aware of your expertise. Treat both your topic and your correspondent with respect.

Diary-Format Short Story: Choose a person or group to whom to present your finished book. (The children's ward? rest home? family member?) Write a theme for your book. Pretend that you are emerging from a forest, and the forest is life. Another person is on his way in, and you have one chance to tell him what life is like. What comment will you make? Next, jot down the setting for your story. Choose a room in your home and make a list of everything that you see. From the list choose one item to be a symbol to epitomize the theme. For example, a picture of a once-prized ice house not rotted from neglect could symbolize the theme that love also crumbles from neglect. After you have chosen the theme, setting, and symbol, select an incident from your life that could, with a little rearranging, demonstrate your theme. Write down a few plot events. For example:

1. Joseph asks me to bake cookies. I'm too busy.

2. Joseph asks me to come to his football game.

3. My sister comes, bakes cookies, attends game.

4. I remember my old rapport with Joseph, spot a picture of the old ice house, and decide not to let my closeness with Joseph crumble from neglect.

Now begin to write your story in diary format. Pretend that you're sitting at your desk reflecting on the day. Keep in mind the person who will be receiving your book. Explain to that person what really happened. Allude to your story's conflict often.

After you have completed your story (the length of which should equal the number of pages it takes to tell it), read the story to two people. Where does your story move naturally? Where is your listener confused? The answers will tell you what parts of your story should be kept as is, what parts need clarification. Make your adjustments directly on your draft; then give your draft to me so that I can react. As soon as we're both satisfied that your story is clear, we'll edit. Then you'll sew pages, glue a fabric cover on a oaktag binding, copy and illustrate the story, and give the book to your reader to enjoy.

Career Research Paper: Choose a career that intrigues you and for which you can find reference material. Brainstorm who-what-where-why-when questions and find six categories into which these questions fit. For example, "What is the salary? Where would I be working?" fit into the category of "Career Benefits." Use the categories as tag words to organize index cards on which to record information. At the bottom of each card note the author and page number. You'll need it when you're writing your paper.

When you have recorded (in your own words, of course) all the information you can find, organize your cards by categories, commandeer your dining room table for a week, and begin to write your paper. Remember that your reader will be an eighth grader like you who is using the Career Center to research. Make her job easier by documenting your facts in footnotes. Make your bibliography perfect so that your reader can go to your source. Use formal language. The informal "you" and "I" and colloquial language are inappropriate in formal writing.

Ready to begin? Write an overview that includes the major points that you plan to cover. Now pick up the first of your stacks of index cards and put the cards in the order in which you'll present the information. Write a topic sentence that helps your reader make the connection between the paragraph she just left and the one she is about to enter. Relate a paragraph on career benefits to an overview that has mentioned all aspects of a career by saying, "One of the most appealing parts of a career as a computer engineer is the number of benefits to be gained while the engineer is still young." After you have written your topic sentence, insert in that paragraph all the informaation that you want to include on that topic. Help your reader's mind to flow smoothly from one thought to the next by using transition words such as "first," "then," "next."

When you have written you way through the first stack of cards and thus produced your first paragraph, write a summary sentence that will help the reader to keep the paragraph's main point in her mind as she goes on to the next paragraph.

Continue to write a topic sentence, paragraph of information, and summary sentence for each of your stacks of cards. (Some of your higher stacks may need several paragraphs.) At last when you're down to the last card in your last stack, write a summary statement that repeats in little what your report has mentioned in detail. Then clean up the dining room table and thank your family for its forebearance.

Now you're ready for stage two. Ask an eighth grader to read your paper: Where does the mind not slip smoothly from one thought to the next? Add a transition thought. What paragraphs give little information? Do further research or eliminate that topic. What paragraphs promise to talk about one topic but talk about another? Change the topic sentence. Does your paper deliver what your overview has promised? If so, take a bow; if not, rewrite the statement-...then take a bow. Does your summary statement mention the main points of your report? If not, include them. Of course, all of these additions should be made on your draft. (You have double spaced, haven't you?)

Now edit your paper for mechanical corrections, show it to me, then type it and donate it to the Career Center of the library where it will receive an author, title, and subject card and become a permanent part of the Career Center's resource material, the first place, probably, where future eighth graders will go to begin a research project of their own.

(The above writing assignment is an adaptation of a course designed and taught at Trumbull High School where I practice taught.)

<u>"Adieu" Bulletin Board:</u> Choose a room in the school that is special to you. Write an essay about the most memorable event to have happened in that room. Before you begin, put yourself back into the room:

What was the same as usual? (assignment on the board? shades precisely at half-mast? teacher at door reminding you that you'd need your journal?)

What was different? (New student? new seating arrangement? You had your homework? You didn't have your homework?)

In what order did events happen? How did you feel?

1. /I felt...

2. /I felt...

When did you know what was going to happen? What clues should you have paid attention to?

How much time has passed since that day? Have your feelings changed?

Now you're ready to begin. Remember that your essay will be displayed on a map-of-the-school bulletin board. Your classmates, teacher, and his colleagues will be reading and remembering. Be sure that your essay doesn't embarrass anyone. Ask two people who were present that day to read your essay. Where could you have been more complete? Have you distorted any facts? Are any parts confusing?

After I have seen your draft, I will ask you to obtain the approval and suggestions of other persons involved in your essay. Then you'll edit, write the final copy, and tack your reminiscence next to "your" room on the bulletin board map of the school that we will construct. On the board the word "good-bye" will be printed in every language we can translate. Your essay will be your "adieu" to your friends, your teachers, and your years at this school.

(This writing for a real audience assignment was designed by the eighth grade English class that I taught at Cloonan Middle School in Stamford. It was our turn to plan a display for the huge bulletin board outside the main office. It was the end of the year, the students were graduating, and the above essays, complete with paper balloons, words of farewell, and map of the school were the result.)

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Will the Real Renie Lake Please Stand Up? by Barbara Morgenroth. Fawcett Juniper, 1982. 189 pp. $1.95.

"It wasn't smart to set yourself apart. What was smart was to blend in. I had blended in like a chameleon." So states Renie Lake whose life began in Cold Spring Harbor, New York, an affluent section of Queens, where she lived an idyllic life. Then her parents divorced and her mother decided she and Renie could make it on their own. A two-bedroom apartment in Elmhurst was quite a change, and Brinton High was an entirely different world. The Jukes and the Sultans controlled everything equally; and for protection, Renie became a Juke. After Renie and her boyfriend got busted for being in a stolen car and possessing an illegal drug, Renie is put into the custody of her father and goes to Connecticut to live with his new family. Here Renie must again "blend"--this time into the life of an affluent community. Renie Lake has some qualities which a young reader should see and, hopefully, identify with. She just needs the right environment in which her abilities can be developed positively. Renie is a survivor. She knows right from wrong; and, in spite of all her problems and bad associations, she remains a "good girl," setting an example for young students to follow. Seventh through tenth grade reluctant readers will especially benefit from this book but all readers should enjoy following Renie's thoughts and actions until the "real Renie Lake stands up."

Reviewed by Janet T. Murphy, Northwest High School, West Hartford, CT.

A Literary Magazine for Middle Grades

Anthony R. Angelo and Marie-Jeanne Laurent

In the real world, written communication is designed to be read by other people. Yet, in the classroom we often ask students to write only as an exercise for one adult, the teacher, to check or evaluate.

The classroom should be a setting where pupils experiment with written language and share their ideas with their peers and with knowledgeable adults--a true writer's laboratory. The most advantageous way to do this in grades five through eight might be a newspaper or magazine composed, developed and published by young people with guidance and direction from the teacher.

This article will explore such a plan.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Quality literature provides a perfect vehicle for developing a classroom magazine in the intermediate-middle grades. Several titles are suggested below. A complete listing to satisfy all reading levels and interests would be impossible. A current reference for appropriate books is or can be found in Children and Books, Sutherland, Monson and Arbuthnot, Scott Foresman, 1981.

Grades 5 and 6

A. The Twenty-one Balloons. Dubois, William Pene, 1948. Fantasy/adventure.

B. Mr. Revere and I. Lawson, Robert, 1953. History/biography.

C. Onion John. Krumgold, Joseph, 1960. Individuality/realism.

D. From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. Konigsburg, Elaine, 1968. Humor-realism.

E. Summer of the Swans. Byars, Betsy, 1971. Friendship/handicaps.

Grades 7 and 8

A. Call It Courage. Sperry, Armstrong, 1940. Adventure.

B. A Wrinkle in Time. l'Engle, Madeleine, 1962. Science fiction.

C. Sounder. Armstrong, William, 1970. Discrimination/family values.

Dr. Anthony R. Angelo and Dr. Marie-Jeanne Laurent are Professors of Reading and Language Arts at CCSU.

D. The Westing Game. Raskin, Ellen, 1979. Mystery/humor.

E. Jacob Have I Loved. Paterson, Katherine, 1981. Rivalry/ realism.

The "assignments" or types of written compositions to be included in the magazine will be varied and multi-leveled. The easier types will be possible for average fifth graders; the more sophisticated will need to be done by capable seventh and eighth graders.

However, all discussing and exploring of ideas gleaned from the books can follow similar sequences, in order that

1. Many ideas, opinions and reactions be articulated in the total group.

2. Each individual student have a personal opportunity to use this "gathering of thoughts" in the way he/she expresses uniqueness in written production.

SPECIFIC STEPS

A. Incubation time

This is the oral composing and comparing period during which the teacher acts as questioner, elicitor, recorder, prodder-catalyst extraordinnaire! These shared thoughts and reactions are normally somewhat random, unexamined, wandering responses to the story and may be emotional, impulsive and disorganized. At this point, all ideas or feelings are acceptable, considered and recorded.

B. Organizational effort

Either in small groups of students or still in the total class, decisions are made that begin to delete certain items, highlight others and categorize the ideas with respect to a basic working outline or format. This is the time for limiting the topics and making the written task become manageable. The written model resulting from this critique should serve to guide each student's writing by offering the main points of value from the discussion period.

C. Composing section.

Working copies of the specified assignment are now assembled by each pupil. This aspect of the total process is undoubtedly the more difficult; it requires great individual concentration, time, evaluation and discipline. Reflection is needed throughout. The teacher needs to be available and active at this time, circulating to encourage, make comments, elucidate and clarify: e.g., "Could we combine

these two ideas into one sentence?" "How about eliminating this redundant phrase?" "Can we use a more vivid word to describe the scene?" This is not the time to have physical or emotional constraints, such as "Watch your spelling and grammar!" or "Remember to stick to the subject!"

D. Rewrite and edit period

If one of the goals of writing is to share it through publishing, this correcting, revising and finalizing will be more meaningful. This is the time to approximate more closely what is really meant, to get closer, in written words, to the original mental images. Exemplary spelling, correct grammar, sentence structure and organization are desirable and will require serious proofreading and re-working. Ideally this editing would be done in individual conferences with the teachers; however conferences may be too time consuming and unrealistic. Editing can be accomplished successfully in small groups of 3-4 students with an adult.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS

The following specific projects are presented and described briefly with one of the above books in mind: Katherine Paterson's Newberry Medal award book, Jacob Have I Loved. Most of the assignments could be done with any of the other novels listed. The activities are listed generally in order of difficulty.

For Grades 5 and 6

1. Devise a crossword puzzle or word search, using vocabulary from the book, aiming for at least a dozen new words of interest.

2. Write a letter to the author, telling her your reaction to the book and asking her questions the story stimulated in your mind.

3. Create poems relating to the characters in the story and the many feelings/emotions described in the book.

4. Originate an advertisement for the book and author. Include music, jingles or appealing art work, depending on what medium you select.

5. Compose an epitaph for one or more of the characters.

6. Write an obituary in the format of a news release for one of the older characters.

7. Imagine a "Dear Abby" type column, where characters in the novel write in about their problems and receive answers or solutions.

8. Create cartoons, whimsical scenes or images containing humorous conversations between story characters, such as the talk Louise and Call had early in the plot while out "crabbing".

9. Write job descriptions for the classified part of your newspaper, using careers (or aspirations) in the book such as fisherman, nurse, musician, etc.

For Grades 7 and 8

1. Write an interview with another student about his reaction to the book or a simulated dialogue with the author. (This may require some research concerning the author's background and other novels.)

2. Record a correspondence or exchange of letters between any two people in the story.

3. Research the geographical area of the book (could be the historical period of a novel instead) and present information about it: climate, economic factors, cities, tourist attractions, population. Include maps and pictures if possible.

4. Eulogize the character you found most praiseworthy. Could be in form of "The Most Interesting Person I Ever Met."

5. Write a book review, as a true critic, giving both strenghts and weaknesses of the novel as you see them.

6. Compose an essay: you are a member of the Newberry committee which selected this book for the 1982 award; justify this choice as eloquently as possible.

7. Submit an editorial defending "Individuality and Equality in the Family" or "...in schools" or "...in the Larger Community."

8. Write a script for a "This is Your Life" radio or television production. Choose any of the main characters as the person being honored.

9. Create recipes that might originate in the Chesapeake Bay area, using products found or raised here. Another possibility: compose a restaurant featuring some of these regional dishes.

WAYS TO GAIN AN AUDIENCE

A. The preparation, lay-out and typing of the manuscript might be done by the students themselves or, by parent volunteers or school secretaries. The teacher would be the editor-in-chief and not solely responsible for

the assembling and producing of the magazine. Mature, capable pupil leaders need the challenge of organizing the work's final physical presentation.

B. The reproduction of the magazine might be done by the Industrial Arts department of the senior high school, or if one exists in the community, the vocational technical school.

C. Recently, state funds/grants have been available to finance publication; in 1980, a state Right-to-Read grant made possible an excellent creative writing magazine named On Butterfly Wings by its 6th grade authors at the Cohanzie School in Waterford.

D. The local board of education may facilitate the magazine's final production and/or reproduction.

E. Small local businesses and corporations may donate monies or facilities to expedite the magazine's appearance.

F. Both local and national newspapers print school children's stories, articles, essays, poems, etc. Examples are the Boston-based Christian Science Monitor, The Hartford Courant, the New Britain Herald.

G. Professional magazines such as Instructor, Grade Teacher and Language Arts often devote space to creative efforts of students. Children's magazines such as Cricket and Weekly Reader also publish pupil material.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The desire for oral discourse and exchange of ideas is natural and necessary for pupils in pre-teen and early-teen years. The free-wheeling discussion needs: a) to be based on quality material, important and thought-provoking and b) to be led and structured by a well-prepared adult, organizing his/her questions or "probings" for maximum articulation.

Once this exchange is analyzed, the student has a personal responsibility to record his point of view in writing. Most pupils will need assistance and encouragement.

The final appearance of these individual efforts will make all the time, energy and planning worthwhile; the inspiration and labor of many minds will reach an appreciative audience!

PAPERBACK REVIEW

8 Plus 1 by Robert Cormier.
Bantam, 1982. 172 pp. $2.25.

Cormier has written these short stories over the years and, in this collection, introduces each with a brief discussion of some aspect of his writing technique reflected in that particular story. Both the discussions and the stories are written in first person, creating an intimate, personal connection between writer and reader. Centering on family life, the stories probe relationships between generations, people and their environments, and the simple complexity of maturing at several ages. The stories are bound together by voice; although many of them involve main characters of different ages in dissimilar circumstances, the reader glimpses life consistently, coming to understand that the young Jerry who risks friendship and injury to help his brother is a younger version of the father who agonizes over his daughter's imminent departure for college. This collection encourages communication in a writer-as-reader, reader-as-writer channel in an unaffected and clear manner. Life is presented matter of factly, softened with compassion. Most of the stories are set in a New England factory town and some explore the author's French-Canadian heritage. These stories reveal another side to the author of The Chocolate War and provide an exciting supplement in both literature and composition instruction.

Reviewed by Chris Sullivan, Plainville High School, Plainville, Ct.

Rewarding Understanding and Warmth

Peter M. Ashe

I have taught seventh grade English for about fifteen years. In earlier years I spent several weeks each year training students to write technically correct letters. I would begin by asking each student in the class to write a letter to an imaginary person (either Jane Smith or Bill Smith) who lived at 103 Main Street in Darien, CT. The students would write a short friendly letter describing a trip (real or imaginary) that they had taken recently. On the back of the page they would draw an outline of an envelope and address it properly. This diagnostic exercise would tell me the general writing ability of the class, and it would serve as a springboard for a lecture/discussion period on the technical aspects of letter writing (later the first letter would be stapled to a final letter for dramatic proof of each child's growth).

Using transparencies and an overhead projector I guided students through the steps in writing a correct letter. I showed them precisely how to organize their heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature. I did the same for many types of business letters.

I used to start in the beginning of January so that I could help my students write to friends and relatives thanking them for Christmas presents. This was relatively successful, but I wanted to do more real-life writing situations. I went to the library and researched a wide variety of real addresses (e.g., every professional sports team in the U.S., candy and soft drink companies, radio and TV stations, and a wide variety of associations, societies, federations, and organizations). I would encourage my students to write favorite teams and speak to their heros, to ask questions and state their opinions about any areas that they felt strongly about, and to ask (politely, of course) for any free materials that were available. They wrote to disc jockeys and program directors in radio and TV and indicated shows that they liked or disliked and why. Sometimes they would try to bring back an already canceled show.

I also collected from magazines the addresses of movie, TV and recording stars. Students also wrote their opinions to magazines and newspapers. In addition, I obtained the listings for pen pal associations in the U.S. and overseas, and I introduced them to Mort. Weisinger's book 1001 Valuable Things You Can Get Free.

All of these real-life writing assignments were successful to a degree, but I was never completely satisfied with

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Peter M. Ashe teaches English at Middlesex Junior High School in Darien, CT. The letter writing assignment he describes in this article was recognized as the most outstanding project for 1982 by the Voluntary Action Center of Southwestern Fairfield County.

the involvement of all of my students until I happened to read Erin Alexander's short article (in the March 1981 edition of the English Journal) about a public relations activity that she had just tried. Ms. Alexander's idea was to have students write a Yuletide "friendly letter" to patients in a nearby nursing home. The public relations aspect this project, although important, was of secondary interest to me. I saw here a wonderful opportunity to bring together two groups of people who could learn from one another. Many of the youngsters I teach either do not have living grandparents or they do not live nearby.

Before I had my students write to a nursing home for the first time last year, I discussed the project with my principal and he readily approved it. My next step was to contact the director of volunteer activities at the local nursing home. She was very enthusiastic and helpful. She provided me with biographies of all her patients who were willing to be pen pals (and that was the majority of patients there). The biographies included the patients' ages, countries of origin, jobs that they held, their hobbies and special interests, their opinions on a variety of topics, and any other information that they wanted to share.

Then I talked to my students about the project. They were enthusiastic.

I passed out the biographies and asked students to select several patients that they would like to write to (I would make the final selection so that each patient would have a pen pal). On the biography sheet students were told the patient's first name and last initial only. They were not told the patient's room number, either. I wanted to protect the patient's privacy at least until I was sure the correspondence was going along satisfactorily. By the same token, I protected the students' privacy by not letting them write their home addresses on the first letter.

Holidays, especially Christmas, can be a lonely time at a convalescent home. I had my students write their first letter a little over a week before Christmas. The students introduced themselves, told about their plans for Christmas Day and the rest of the vacation, and told about presents they had gotten for friends and relatives. They were encouraged to include photographs or other enclosures. I read each letter and conferred with the student about the proper letter format, proofreading errors, and any possible inappropriate language or remarks.

With my students' cooperation, I was able to put together a background sheet about each of them. It stated

the names and ages of their brothers and sisters, the interests and hobbies of the student, and the student's future career preference. I gave this information to the director of volunteers who would, in turn, give it to the appropriate patient. Hopefully, this would help the patient appreciate his/her student pen pal more and provide some topics for conversation.

Next I hand-delivered the letters to the volunteers director, along with a list of the pairs of student-patient pen pals. Then the director assigned social workers, therapists, and volunteers to take the letters to the patients and get a reply.

As soon as my students returned from their Christmas vacation, I had them write their second letters. This time they described their family's Christmas, the presents they gave and received, and any trips or outings they had. Some students included photographs.

I also hand-delivered the second batch of letters. By this time, the patients generally had developed an interest in their pen pals, and now they would have their chance to write back. Some patients read their letters and wrote their replies without assistance. Many patients needed some degree of help. Most of the students were able to get replies directly from their pen pals. In some cases, however, patients had passed away or had gone to another hospital for treatment subsequent to the first letter before Christmas. In these cases the director of volunteers wrote the student a letter explaining the circumstances. I found that my students could handle the truth and respected this honesty.

During the third week of January, we made a field trip to the convalescent center, and the pen pals met face to face. There was great excitement and anticipation among the students. Several days beforehand we had a class discussion about what a convalescent center is and how it differs from a hospital. We talked about the layout of the building and the types of therapy offered there. These frank discussions seemed to help dispel any possible anxieties.

The field trip began with a tour of the center. Then it was time for the students to meet their pen pals. As we passed by a room or saw a resident pen pal, the pairs were introduced. The meetings were very poignant, sometimes with both patient and student crying for joy. At the end of our visit, the director of volunteers provided us with refreshments and a chance to ask questions about anything

that was on our minds. The director gave a brief lecture about the career opportunities available at a convalescent center (e.g. physicians, dieticians, physical therapists, social workers, psychiatrists, religious counselors, recreational counselors, nurses, nurses aides, orderlies, consultants, office workers, business administrators) and how students could become volunteer workers.

After our visit many students continued to correspond (and sometimes visit) their pen pals. Some of my students became volunteers at the center.

The final letter writing assignment was given the week before summer vacation. I asked my students to bring their pen pals up to date on events that had transpired since January (even though most of them hadn't been writing in the interim) and let their pen pals know their plans for the summer.

Also, students were given the birthdays of their patients and were asked to write a birthday letter at the appropriate time (especially those patients with birthdays in January through June). Students whosepatients had their birthdays between July and December were asked to write at Valentine's Day or Easter instead of on the birthday.

Looking back, I much prefer the genuineness and warmth that I found in my students' letters to the convalescent center to the self-serving half-truths contained in letters designed to obtain free merchandise (e.g., stickers, photos, samples) from companies, sports teams, and celebrities. Also, as I personally became involved with the convalescent center, I saw how little direct contact the center's patients had with young people and how their spirits were raised by getting to know my students. The letter writing project is something that my students and I have enjoyed from December through June. We continue to feel its rewards long after that.

Journalizing Journalism

Carol J. Balvanz

Every year along with my other teaching duties, I face the same mountain looming in the fog. Somehow we (3 to 4 students and I) have to produce a yearbook for our school of 300 students (K-12) given no journalism class time and no financial support from the school. Our yearbook company is happy to take my editors to their summer camp (for $150 each) and teach them the finer points of selling ads, marketing books, and laying out pages. But when the school year begins, we face the task of making the book special for our school for this particular year.

This past year we chucked the traditional themes of "Traces," "Photographs and Memories," and "Changes." My students, who have spent two years in student centered writing classes, chose the theme, My Journal 1982.

What resulted was a book for Radcliffe students based on many students' (and teachers') journal entries over the course of the year. We eliminated the last minute scratching out of copy from memory and wrote reactions as events occurred in personal journals. Usually yearbook copy is a summary of the year's activities in academics, sports, music, and homeroom. Our copy included a football player's views of winning the conference title, a speech contestant's butterflies before and after contest, a student's experience of trying out for the play and making the cast, and even student memories of two teachers who were retiring after 20 plus years in the system. We designed our own division pages using actual handwriting and dated entries from real student journals, neatly recopied and coupled with appropriate pictures. Our headlines were one-liners taken from journal entries. The front piece explained the copy as the journal of "any" and "every" student at Radcliffe. The closing, a student written poem, reflected metaphorically on the year and the journal coming to a close. Even the elementary copy consisted of journal entries--those of high school students' reactions to their interaction with elementary students on the buses, in the lunchroom, or in the halls.

The idea probably doesn't sound really different. Most yearbooks contain student written copy. But as we have neither the resources nor time for a journalism class in our curriculum, this idea provided us with an important element for improving students' motivation to write--an audience outside the classroom. Since journals are kept and shared

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© 1982 Carol J. Balvanz

in several English classes, it seemed natural to use these as a source of yearbook copy. Students were given the options of submitting a journal entry for a specific event, as general copy to use where the staff chose, or not at all. We filed all entries, studied them as we worked on pages, and asked for revisions from the authors when we needed them. Students enjoyed submitting their work for possible publication, and began to write in their journals with a purpose of recording and communicating something about their school year. Almost everyone who submitted material was included somewhere in the book. In fact, we had so much good writing, we often had difficult choices to make.

We didn't include by-lines. We made this decision in hopes of preserving unity--the idea that the Journal 1982 was a journal of every and any student. We did do some editing to keep the styles reasonably related, but since students were writing in their "journal voices", we didn't have to do much.

We kept the idea of audience--their peers, parents and community--before the students all year. Journals took on a new significance for the students as did much of their other writing. Many submitted personal essays for consideration on a particular page. The idea eliminated the painful chore of assigning, reminding, and begging for copy to be written. The editors were able to do their job of editing rather than having to write much of it themselves.

We're anxious to see the finished books. The printer will deliver them this fall. In the meantime, I've got my plans laid to suggest Journal 1983 for next year's theme. I think we can involve even more people. The elementary classes could produce their own student written copy as one possible change. I hope to encourage more teachers to keep journals for copy for academic pages. Our goal is to preserve a memory. The pictures capture the students as they were at that time. The copy preserves their thoughts and feelings. And if in the preserving we encourage active journal writing and revision, we're giving students a reason to write well.

Biography Partners

Dorothy Francis and Joan E. Shea

Learning and sharing specific information take on new significance when older and younger students collaborate on writing. Such a collaboration began out of a biography unit that paired fifth graders with younger children. When the project was suggested to the older students, their response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic; they were eager to interview second graders and to try to write biographies using personalized details.

This was the beginning of a language arts program based on a simple idea--one child teaching another--that meets a variety of needs. Each child benefits from writing skills and from the individual attention and help that may not otherwise be available. The approach promotes confidence and friendliness, a boost for every child's self-image. To duplicate this project, all a teacher need do is join forces with an upper or lower grade teacher.

Before we arranged a time and place for our two classes (second and fifth grades) to meet, the fifth graders completed a unit on bookbinding. Vinyl wallpaper was cut and fashioned over cardboard to form covers for the books. One sheet of construction paper (9" x 12") and 8 sheets of white paper (8½" x 11½") were held together and folded in half. These pages were then sewn together. The end construction papers were finally glued to the insides of the book cover. The book was then put aside until the final copy of the biography was ready to be copied.

Teacher and fifth grade students also brainstormed for the questions they could ask--questions on the second grader's name, age, address, phone number, favorite pets and toys, relatives and friends, hobbies, likes and dislikes, kinds of books read, and so on. Each question was written on a separate index card, and these cards were grouped according to a sequence or chronology, which later became the Table of Contents of the biographies.

The two classes met at midmorning in the cafeteria. Each fifth grader was paired with a second grader. Since there were more second graders, a couple of older students volunteered to do two interviews and wrote two biographies. The session lasted one hour, and the classes conducted themselves in an enthusiastic yet business-like manner. There

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Dorothy Francis, currently teaching fifth grade, has been a fifth and sixth grade Language Arts teacher at Saugatuck Elementary School in Westport, CT, for the past 12 years. Joan Shea has taught the intermediate grades in Westport for 5 years and is presently teaching first grade at Greens Farms Elementary School.

was a sense of excitement in the cafeteria as both teachers circulated around the room offering assistance when it was requested.

Back in the fifth grade classroom, students and teacher developed a core spelling list for the stories which included such words as "favorite, special, spaghetti, address," etc. Next each student wrote a rough draft on yellow paper which was an exact copy of the final white paper in the book. Then they edited, rewrote, and polished the material with teacher/aide assistance. Space was left on certain pages for illustrations which were drawn either by fifth graders, or (in some cases) second graders.

At the next scheduled meeting with the younger children each pair of students started proofreading. The second graders looked for errors or omissions. When the checking was complete, each fifth grader rewrote the biography and proofread it again. A Table of Contents, Title Page, and Dedication were also written, and each page was numbered to match the Table of Contents.

At a final meeting with the younger children, the fifth graders read the stories aloud to a very interested audience. The youngsters were fascinated to hear their names, interests and families woven into stories, and their older friends were proud of their finished manuscripts.

The culmination of the writing unit was an authors' party at which time the biographies were presented to the second graders. School officials were invited, a receiving line was conducted, and refreshments were served. The books were displayed in the school library for two weeks and were then officially sent home with the second graders. A follow-up took place within a week when the second graders wrote thank-you notes to the fifth graders.

The entire project was a tremendous success. Both groups improved their use of spelling and grammar, learned to proofread and read aloud expressively and clearly. The fifth graders were amazed at the ideas the "little kids" had, and the second graders grinned broadly whenever they met the "bigger kids" on the playground or in the hall. But perhaps best of all was the newly awakened awareness of writing as an exciting and rewarding experience.

EMIT: A Class Project

John Azrak

"Emit," Paul volunteered.

"What? What are you talking about?" Sally questioned, echoing the sentiments of the class.

"It's TIME spelled backwards," Paul answered proudly. There followed a chorus of "not bads" and we had the start of our class magazine.

But not without argument. "What's this about writing a magazine, Mr. A.?" "This is a T.V. course; I'm here to watch T.V." "Aren't we going to get into some heavy metal, man?" "I don't ever read magazines."

These juniors were enrolled in Communication Arts, the prized upperclass elective, which when translated into a curriculum blurb read: NO MORE WRITING. Learn how to analyze T.V. shows and classic films. Make your own videotapes, classroom commercials, slide-shows, light shows, cosmic video game shows!

The students were arguing that they had paid their dues and Communication Arts was their just desserts. As basic writers, they had been enrolled (sentenced?) for two years in the imaginatively titled "Reading, Writing and Vocabulary" courses, "I and II." The courses were the school's response to the "back to basics" movement and, as in most places, the approach was misguided. The underlying belief that basic skills of writing can be taught by placing "instruction, learning and evaluation under the jurisdiction of a precise technical system," as Neil Postman describes such attempts in Teaching as a Conserving Activity, leads to failure, for in mimicking the technocrats we improve statistics, not students.

This class was a case in point. After two years, they hated the idea of writing. The idea of a class magazine threatened their well-being. They had never written for anyone, with the exception of the two teachers who returned their essays with the usual splattering of red ink. The logic of the curriculum, which was geared to provide these non-college bound students with enough skills to pass the Regents Competency Exam and then to reward them with "play" courses, dictated their logic. The media was part of their lives; writing wasn't. They knew that; they thought I (the school) knew that, taught them that; so what was this fuss I was making about wanting them to write for the pure enjoyment of it, for themselves,

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John Azrak is Director of Pelham High School's alternative program and co-author of The Learning Community (Paulist Press, New York). Currently he is writing fiction and pursuing a doctorate at NYU.

and for their friends and classmates? And how could I think that writing was important after sophomore year, or that it was in fact a medium and should be part of the course?

So we argued and discussed. I would not abandon the popular media, I promised, but in the spirit of F.C.C. regulations, asked for equal time for each, writing included. I knew that it was important to lay a foundation, construct a context for their writing if they were to do it seriously and learn from the experience. For four prior years I had worked in a school-within-a-school program, and along with my colleague James Penha, developed a writing program based upon appreciation of writing as an extension of one's self. We were free to establish our own curriculum and engaged the students in doing so. We spent countless hours answering students' questions and objections and listening to their opinions. What evolved, we like to believe, was a community of writers that enhanced the philosophy of a school called The Learning Community. The thrust of the community (175 students and 6 teachers) was a blend of interdependence and independence. Writing, therefore, became not only an intensely personal experience but also a means of communication for what was, admittedly, a ready-made audience. Consequently, many of our projects were designed with a "real" audience in mind and our methodology--described by Penha in "The Inner Game of Writing" (CEJ, Fall, 1976) practiced with real people as the focus. Questions such as "why write?" and "write for whom?" evaporated as class newspapers, magazines, group interaction based on students' short stories and poems, and ongoing philosophical discussions based on anything from a research paper to a journal entry became commonplace. But this was not the real world, or so our critics said, and when we closed The Learning Community due to political and financial pressures, I vowed to carry what I had learned with me into the traditional classroom.

Well, easier promised than done. The culture shock brought on by the large, impersonal, non-interdisciplinary environment was fierce. And, more importantly, arguing for writing in a class I was assigned because of my progressive background made me a reactionary. When I challenged the class (and the principal afterwards), I was beset by role confusion. So I resorted to a Learning Community project and envisioned a Learning Community audience in the form of the other Communications Arts sections. There were five, with approximately twenty-five students in each. A neat little class-within-a-class.

"Let's write for the other Communication Arts classes," I suggested after the few classes we had spent ironing out the idea of writing.

"All of them?"

"Sure. They're your age with similar interests. It'll be a great audience. We'll create a magazine."

The fears surfaced again. "I can't write." "I never have anything to write about." "Who wants to read what we write about?"

They were more afraid of the magazine than the competency exam. That they could do over again. And it was private. But they were ready to work--some just tired of discussing, some excited, some guardedly enthusiastic--and I think each knew, at least instinctively, that only by doing would his fear subside.

There was some discussion about grades and I assured them that they'd get one, and probably a good one, for they weren't about to let their friends see anything but their best work. "You'll each have a by-line," I reminded them, and there was a certain buzz of anticipation about seeing their names in print.

I told them to bring in two or three magazines apiece the next day to start the project. We would spend a week, maybe less, just reading and analyzing the different formats. We had to learn what a magazine was before we created one, and we'd do that in small groups, exchanging our wares. We'd also change the environment of the room--fill the bulletin board with a magazine cover collage, rearrange the desks according to departments, make the place feel "newsroomy".

"Like on Lou Grant?"

"Yeah. Like on Lou Grant. Good idea."

I told them to leave Playboy, High Times and their parents' other magazines at home, and they laughed with a spirit I hoped they'd bring to work.

I contacted the other Communication Arts teachers that afternoon and asked if they would distribute and read the magazine in their classes. All five were supportive, and three suggested that if it worked we might have a class magazine-exchange in the future. "Terrific," I responded and brought these teachers into collusion immediately. I knew I would need a ton of mimeo paper and asked them to store an extra package or two for me. Since it is a demand-greater-than-supplies market, one must plan ahead.

The next day I broke the class into groups of four and asked them to pool their magazines. Each of them was to choose two magazines from the group and examine them thoroughly. They were to feel free to discuss what they were reading with their group members, but each student was responsible to record his analyses in his notebook, following this guideline:

1. Identify the number of pages and the estimated amount of space alloted for advertisements.

2. Comment on the general design of the magazine: size, format, amount of artwork, print, etc.

3. Examine how the magazine is divided by space allotted for feature articles, editorials, sports, reviews, etc.

4. Try to determine what population (ex. white, middle class, adult) the magazine is geared to. Who is the audience?

5. Choose two articles from each magazine and comment on the language: What is the vocabulary like? Is the article written well? Does it capture your interest? Entertain? Instruct? Is it logical and coherent? Include a synopsis of each article.

6. Write some general comments about what you liked and didn't like about each magazine. What would you like to incorporate or leave out of ours?

7. Start thinking about our magazine in terms of what you'd like to contribute. Record your thoughts and feelings.

On the bottom of this ditto I supplied definitions for an editorial, a feature, a review and a news article (which I had culled from a journalism text). The definitions generated a discussion which led to our making a distinction between subjective and objective writing. It was a concept I planned to examine more closely as I worked within each group.

The analysis of the magazines was more strenuous than they had anticipated and, for some, it was the first concentrated reading they had done in a long while. There was enough material, though, for the students to settle into something of interest to them and many, over the course of the week, became eager to share what they had read. I moved from group to group, assisting the students in following the writing guideline and, in general, exchanging ideas with them about what they had read. I reinforced that they, too, would have an audience and that that often made writing easier. Naturally, their interests -- individual and group -- emerged in our conversations and they became the motivational hooks to hang their writing on. The week was well spent.

When Paul offered EMIT as our title, and the class agreed it was a good one, I wrote it on the board and we

began brainstorming. What we were going to emit came out in a rush and the chalkboard and the pages in their notebooks were quickly filled with ideas. The theme was what they agreed was of interest to themselves and their fellow juniors. What wasn't agreed upon was omitted. "For other magazines," I suggested.

The "hot" topics included: The pros and cons of the legalization of marijuana; teenage pregnancy and abortion; portraits of "greasers," "jocks," and "preppies;" the rise of soccer in the suburban schools; the pros and cons of living in the suburbs; disco music vs. rock; nutrition and the cafeteria food, among many others.

Each student was required to select two topics for which he was responsible. (Exceptions were made for the two artists who would illustrate the pages and the four typists. They were assigned one written article each.) I then organized the room according to general departments. Students were assigned, by their choices, to either the news department, or the sports department, or the interview (fictional) department, etc. Each department was designated an area of the room and each group was expected to elect its own editor. Some students, of course, crossed groups.

Each article was to be written a minimum of three times (drafts in the notebook which I would check) and expected to fill a minimum of one ditto sheet, although I told them it would probably spill over. In conjunction with the roving artists, each student was also responsible for the design of his page. I emphasized that the finished product was his, and his alone, though I expected them to cooperate in the writing. Proofreading and editing were going to be a group effort, with the final corrections made by the elected editor who would then submit the articles to me. Their first real audience, I reiterated, was their group. "They will react and respond, and they will represent your larger audience. Expect and demand feedback."

As the students wrote, I worked individually on mechanics with them. Each wanted a polished product that he could sign, so there was no resistance to rewriting. More grammar was learned than in weeks of grammar lessons.

Within two active, often noisy, sometimes chaotic weeks, we had some fifty pages of smartly designed and written copy. Some articles were, of course, better than others. But the effort was present in each. Added, by those who had finished their assignment early, were pages of advertisements, a horoscope, an advice column and a crossword puzzle comprised of the names of fellow juniors. The cover was an hourglass, drawn by one of the artists, with the sands flowing upward (TIME backwards?) and the table of contents, after the editors and I arranged and numbered the pages,

was typed and illustrated (more sand) last.

The students were enthusiastic and most showed up after school to help me run off, collate, and staple the magazine. They wanted more copies than we could make. And shortly, the good-natured challenge they heard from their peers that they could do better was confirmation for my students that they had done a terrific job. The audience was indeed real, and growing. The principal wanted copies for Parents' Night. Teachers of the other electives read the magazine, as did some of the students' friends from other schools. As the responses trickled in, I shared the students' genuine joy, which was the final argument for the inclusion of writing as a communication of art.

BOYNTON/COOK PUBLISHERS, INC.

NEW Spring, 1983

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Series Editor: GERALD CAMP
11 of the monographs published in the initial BAWP Curriculum Series gathered under the headings: The Writing Process; Developing Fluency; Beginning; Drafting; and Responding and Revising.

fforum: *Essays on Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Writing*
Edited by PATRICIA STOCK
A collection of 50 key articles—some expanded, some revised—from the *Newsletter* of the English Composition Board of The University of Michigan. Contributors include Berthoff, Britton, Coles, Corbett, D'Angelo, Elbow, Fader, Don Graves, Lauer, Macrorie, Nancy Martin, Moffett, Murray, Redish, Robinson, Torbe.

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DAVID FOSTER
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Published Fall, 1982

Learning by Teaching: *Selected Articles on Writing and Teaching*
DONALD M. MURRAY

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Using Letter Writing in the Classroom

Thomas Patrick Fitzgerald and Kathleen Witthoft Byrne

Motivating students to write for different audiences is one of the most challenging problems teachers face. As classroom teachers anxious to find motivational strategies to develop writing skills, we noticed the interest our students had in the advice columns of "Dear Abby" and Ann Landers. Students' conversations often centered on the latest letters and advice. We realized the inherent motivation such material had and the opportunities it presented for skill development in writing for different purposes and audiences.

"Dear Tabby" is a series of activities designed to develop reading and writing skills. A set of ten "Dear Abby" letters is rewritten to clearly indicate selected characteristics of the writer. The writers might be doctors, fourth graders, truck drivers or office workers. Small groups of three or four students read and discuss each letter to determine

1) who wrote the letter (identify word clues to writers' characteristics);
2) what advice could (should) be given;
3) how the group will compose a response; and
4) if the advice is appropriate.

This series of activities focuses the students' attention on the key words used by the writers to communicate their concerns. Small group work has several benefits. It

1) allows weaker students to interact profitably with those who have stronger skills;
2) encourages close reading of the letters as problems to be solved;
3) emphasizes that there are several possible responses from which to choose the best;
4) allows for sharing among small groups when their "products" are finished; and
5) indicates a range of audiences to whom the responses should be written.

To illustrate the process, two letters are presented here with these directions to students:

Thomas Patrick Fitzgerald, Ed.D., works for the New York State Eduction Department as the Supervisor for Basic Skills and is the author of Using Language (Learnco, Inc., Exeter, New Hampshire).

Kathleen Witthoft Byrne is a reading specialist for the Lansingburgh School District and has taught at both the elementary and secondary level.

1) Read each of the letters received by "Dear "Tabby."
2) Discuss the following points in your group:
   a) What is the problem?
   b) What words or sentences give you clues to the type of person who wrote the letter?
   c) List three possible sets of advice you might give.
   d) Select the <u>most</u> appropriate advice and give your reasons why you selected that advice.
3) Write a letter which includes the advice you selected.
4) Be prepared to read your letter to other groups.

79 Coop Street
Troy, New York 12182
May 1, 1982

Dear Tabby:

My husband, Elmer, is a pigeon lover. He belongs to pigeon clubs, goes to meetings, gets letters from other pigeon lovers, and, of course, we have pigeons.

If we go anyplace, it's just to another pigeon lover's house. I sit in the car while Elmer looks at birds and talks pigeon talk.

The last time we went somewhere that didn't have something to do with pigeons was on New Year's Eve. Elmer doesn't like to be with people unless they own pigeons.

Please Tabby, what should I do?

Sincerely,

Cooped Up

****

97 Meadow Lane
Colonie, New York 23456
October 25, 1981

Dear Tabby:

My brother is an electrician, but he never fixes anything in our house. We have a toaster that is in pieces, because he started to fix it and never finished the job. Last Christmas he promised to fix my hair dryer, but he hasn't even started the job yet!

He helps a lot of other people without being paid, but he never seems to care about his own family. I give up! What do you think I should do?

Your reader,

Sis

"Dear Tabby" combines motivational material with the skill of writing for different audiences. Such a unit represents a problem solving approach to writing and reading instruction. The next time you read an advice column, consider how your students would react to a "Dear Tabby" unit.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Headless Roommate and Other Tales of Terror by Daniel Cohen. Bantam, 1982. 138 pp. Illustrated. $1.75.

Remember reading Ray Bradbury's October Country as a kid, and hearing the furnace in the basement go thump when you were alone in the house? Chances are, if you were like me, you waited until you were around 21 until you went down those dark stairs to meet the evil that lived behind the water heater. The truth is, horror stories always fascinate readers, and they will continue to creep into the hands of our students. Despite the B-movie title of The Headless Roommate, this collection of slightly tame horror stories should be entertaining to middle school readers or to older students of very low reading ability. The 19 stories are short on characterizations and of course long on twist endings. Daniel Cohen comments after each tale by explaining the actual folklore origins of the story. This is an interesting feature which should inspire some research and writing projects in the motivated student. The stories are pretty bloodless, and lack gore. The atmospheric illustrations of terrified victims have more gobble-eyes than a fish market. All in all, this book would be a good treat for your slow readers, if you want to keep them up at night. Did I just hear the furnace downstairs?

Reviewed by Joseph Calabro, Pomperaug High School, Southbury, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Alvin Fernald, TV Anchorman by Clifford B. Hicks.
Bantam-Skylar, 1982. 140 pp. $1.95.

Alvin Fernald, being interviewed about his exploits, is challenged by an insulted newscaster to present a broadcast of his own. With the help of his sister Daphne, friends of Shoie and Pete, and Mr. Kubec the cameraman, Alvin's one program turns into a nationally watched segment. Through correspondence with other famous newsmen, Alvin discovers that Mr. Kubec is wanted by the FBI. Confronted wih this, Kubec explains the difficulty to Alvin and reveals that he is Pete's father. Alvin, of course, finds the missing evidence, clears Mr. Kubec, and reunites father and son on national television. The previous synopsis indicates one problem with the story--its lack of realism. However, the book may appeal to readers of the previous "Alvin Fernald" episodes, and indeed, relies heavily on the reader's knowledge of them. In addition, the vocabulary is often too sophisticated for fourth or fifth grade readers who would be drawn to this book. Although some of the newscasts are amusing, there is little to recommend here. Readers of the other books in the series may find this one somewhat entertaining. Other readers may view it as merely unrealistic.

Reviewed by Debra Wynn, Noah Webster School, Farmington, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Dragons in the Waters by Madeleine L'Engle.
Dell, 1982. 330 pp. $2.50.

The main character in this mystery, thirteen-year-old Simon Renier, travels with his strange uncle to Venezuela to give a family heirloom, a portrait of Simon Bolivar, to a museum. The journey is one of personal testing and growth for him. He questions the religious beliefs of his grandmother, who acts as his guardian. He also faces physical danger as the victim of a kidnapping and learns the value of loyalty to friends. Poly and Charles O'Keefe and their father (From Arm of the Starfish) appear again in this novel. They provide support and advice as Simon copes with a fork lift accident, a robbery and a murder. The O'Keefes also celebrate with Simon at an Indian cememony as he discovers his ancestral link to the Quiztano tribe. The Quiztano village, with its caring places instead of hospitals, for instance, provides a good contrast to the industrialized society of the twentieth century, and the author's anthropological comments enrich the novel. Madeleine L'Engle has written another excellent adventure story incorporating realistic characterizations, fast-paced action, and sound values. It is highly recommended for high school readers of average or above-average ability.

Reviewed by Mary Thetford, Quinnipiac College, Hamden, CT.

Our Town

J. P. Rhinesmith

For a practical writing situation, students can create a pamphlet or brochure suitable for distribution to newcomers. Preparatory activity might include telephone procedures, interviewing techniques, news writing, selecting and organzing information, and persuasive writing. The class could be divided into groups, or teams, each responsible for a section, or individual assignments could be made. The class could also be divided into a staff, with individuals responsible for editing, typing, planning and deadlines, and with editors for each section. The sections of the brochure are:

1. Cover.
2. Title page.
3. Contents page.
4. Map.
5. Short history of town.
6. Directions by car, air, train, and bus. Include terminals and connection services, times (daily, five times a day), and travel times to your town from major cities.
7. Weather report for a typical day in each of the four seasons, average high and low temperatures, average rainfall.
8. Recreational areas in and around your town. Include public and private facilities: parks, swimming pools, tennis courts, mini-golf, baseball diamonds, jogging areas, nature trails.
9. Sports. Include local teams, little league, PAL teams, adult softball and basketball leagues, bowling facilities and leagues, dance clubs, possibilities for lessons or instruction.
10. Youth groups. Include YMCA/YWCA, boys clubs, boy/cub/girl scouts, churches that have youth groups, youth groups affiliated with fraternal organizations.
11. Entertainment. Include movies, arcades, clubs.
12. Restaurants. Include a selection from these categories--expensive, moderate, inexpensive. Include, too, chains in the town, and restaurants especially noted for ethnic or special menu items.

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13. Major industries, products, markets. Size of work force. Salaries.

14. Institutions of higher learning in and around your town; public, private, and parochial schools; technical and vocational schools. Include costs and major programs of study.

15. Housing. Include the price range for one-two-three bedroom apartments/condos/single family homes/multi-family homes. Public housing and qualifications.

16. Taxes. Include year of last reassessment and year of next reassessment; tax basis for property and personal property taxes; special taxes such as sewer usage and fire district taxes; other fees such as water.

17. Shopping. Include large grocery stores, discount or department stores, and locations. Include a sampling of speciality stores.

18. Town services. Include hospitals and emergency medical services, veteran's services, courts, senior centers, police and fire services, clinics, rest homes, churches, librarires, museums, health department services, employment services (public and private).

19. Newspapers, including local free advertising newsletters.

20. (optional) Photographs or sketches of local points of interest.

Student Publishing Opportunities

Helen Clara Lee

English teachers have already discovered the magic motivation of students whose teacher of writing writes with and for them. The same student inspiration can be tapped by the teacher whose students see their teacher's name bylining a published article. A teacher of English has ample opportunities to be published in the many fine affiliate journals of the profession. Issues of the English Journal for January, 1975; January, 1978; and January, 1980 list these resources. The Arizona English Bulletin for April, 1979 lists more than one hundred publishing opportunities for teachers of writing.

Local outlets exist as well. A writing teacher may collaborate with a teacher from another subject area--a teacher of science or social studies, perhaps--on a subject of common concern. Other content areas often support active and well-edited state affiliate journals published by subject area associations. If the teacher is located in a large city, a viewpoint on education is likely to find space on an op-ed page of the local newspaper. The teacher of writing who wants to set students an example has little reason for not using these opportunities. The writing teacher who has become published finds it easy to infect students with enthusiasm for seeing work in print, especially if the teacher shares some of the letters which often come to writers from their readers. Teachers and their students may also use the letters-to-the-editors section of the editorial page to explore topics of local interest. Beyond these local and regional publishing opportunities lies an ever-expanding number of publications that encourage young readers to write for their magazines. After students in the intermediate or middle school grades are involved in writing and binding together stories shared with children in lower grades they are ready to write articles for readers of magazines for younger children. Or, they may choose to write articles for young people their own age. Here is a list of magazines for young people that publish articles, stories, poems, book reviews and other materials from young writers.

Creative Teens
1109 Georgia S.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108
Publishes letters, fiction, artwork, and non-fiction.
Publishes materials from photography and poetry contest winners.

Helen Lee is author of A Humanities Approach to Teaching Secondary School English. Her articles have appeared in the English Journal and the American School Board Journal. She is Associate Professor of Education at Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne, IN.

Kind
Room 200
2100 L Street Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20037
Accepts articles of interest to those interested in humane treatment of animals by children.
Accepts articles, puzzles, letters, reports of class activities, artwork such as bumper stickers, designs for bird feeders or animal shelters, cartoons, fiction, non-fiction, unusual facts about animals, poster designs, reports of shield-parent projects, fund raising reports, and other items of importance to animal lovers.

Cricket
Open Court Publishing Company
Box 100
Lasalle, Illinois 61301
Publishes fiction, poetry, letters, and puzzles.
Emphasis on holiday-of-the-month topics.

Wombat
365 Ashton Drive
Athens, Georgia 30606
Publishes letters, poetry, artwork, fiction, and non-fiction.

Chart Your Course
G/C/T/ Publishing Company
Box 66707
Mobile, Alabama 36660-1707
Publishes fiction, artwork, poetry, puzzles, reports of class activities, computer programs, puzzles and cartoons.

Odyssey
Astromedia Corporation
P.O. Box 92788
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202
Publishes fiction, non-fiction, poetry and letters.

Cobblestone
28 Main Street
Peterborough, New Hampshire 03458
Publishes fiction, artwork, poetry and letters.

Penny Power
256 Washington Street
Mount Vernon, New York 10550
Publishes letters from young consumers and replies to questions of the month.

McGuffey Writer
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio 45056
Publishes stories, cartoons, essays, poems, book reports and reports of class projects.

National Geographic World
Accepts photographs, artwork, poems and plans for using recycled objects.

Ranger Rick's Nature Magazine
1412 16th Street Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20036
Publishes stories, pictures, poems, reports of nature activities and photographs.

Compukids
P.O. Box 975
Sedalia, Missouri
Publishes computer programs for various brands of computers, computer related articles and short stories.

3-2-1 Contact
E M C Square
P.O. Box 2931
Boulder, Colorado 80321
Accepts accounts of machines and solicits responses to polls and quizzes.

This is a selective, but certainly not exhaustive list of publishing opportunities.

The teacher should check to see if the school media center carries youth magazines. All too often in middle schools, the library subscribes to adult magazines far less desirable than periodicals specifically designed for young readers. Most libraries carry The Children's Magazine Guide, an index similar to the Reader's Guide, which furnishes lists of articles published in each periodical, appropriate age group for each, and addresses from which sample copies may be requested. If a teacher uses school letterhead stationery and states that samples will be left in a media center, copies of listed periodicals are often free. The annual cost of the index is $15.

Children's Magazine Guide (formerly Index to Children's Magazine)
2020 University Avenue
Suite 6
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

A class interested in writing for publication might well make a collection of such periodicals and submit materials to several of them. Editors are often willing to send

contributors a list of the focus or center of interest for each of several coming issues so that contributions can be suited to their publication plans. From sample or library copies, the young writer can learn publication requirements, which often differ from magazine to magazine. Individual differences in requirements for length, format, or the possibility for illustrations may be discovered in certain spots in the magazine. The young writer needs to learn to look for this information on the editorial page or near the cover. Writers learn to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope, to write a short cover letter, and to include a short vita and, if invited to do so, a picture. Many magazines have monthly contests for poetry, fiction, photographs, and other writing. Entry requirements must be followed with care. These opportunities provide practical experiences in writing for real audiences.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Notes for Another Life by Susan Ellen Bridgers.
Bantam, 1982. 201 pp. $2.25.

Everything and nothing happens in Bridgers' latest novel. Fourteen year old Wren feels the first stirrings of love. Her father momentarily returns from a mental institution. Her mother decides to divorce her father. And her brother Kevin attempts suicide. The book intertwines these four seemingly intense actions, yet somehow none of the actions truly affects any of the characters. Unlike normal human beings, the teenagers, moms, dads, and grandparents in this novel understand all their failures and learn from all of their own flaws. All of the characters, even the fourteen-year-olds, deal maturely with budding and lost love. Teenage children accept being abandoned by their mother and learn to unconditionally love her, in spite of it. These kids can even accept their father's recurring returns to an insane asylum, singing merry songs with their grandmother on their weekly visits to the institution. Nothing is quite this peachy. In this world of turmoil, unkind endings, and endless misunderstandings, Notes For Another Life is an escapist's anachronism. It never hits home but instead borders on a high school version of Dick and Jane, proving that no matter the problem, "This is the best of all possible worlds."

Reviewed by Kristina Elias, Farmington High School, Farmington, Ct.

Interdisciplinary Writing in the Elementary School

Katherine Jones Loheyde

The days when writing was the sole province--and problem--of the language arts teacher are over. Throughout the various content areas, teachers now recognize that literacy in their specific discipline is indeed their province and, hence, their problem. The initial issue raised was reading in the content areas, and now, close on its heels, a second issue: writing in the content areas.

The focus here is threefold: to investigate what kind and how much writing is done in the content areas; to look at the use of writing in evaluation; and to suggest strategies for further integrating writing skills into the content areas.

The kinds of writing students generally undertake in school fall into three categories: formal expository prose, expressing writing, and a fragmented "response" writing, the most common writing requirement. Formal expository prose is most closely approximated in report writing. English and history classes in the upper grades, for example, often adopt the once-a-semester or once-a-year research paper model; sometimes foreign language courses employ research papers to study the culture, geography, production or political habits of another country. In addition, general science courses may require a "report": this often amounts to a World Book Encyclopedia rendition of the life of the anaconda or the mating habits of the date palm. Rarely is the student actually "writing" such a report; usually it is read aloud and the accuracy of the facts given is the primary criterion for success.

Expressive writing is defined as that for which traditional outside sources are not used. This includes creative writing, ranging from fantasy or poetry to providing endings for stories or hypothesizing the outcome of a character beyond the end of the book or play ("what do you think happened to Templeton? or "tell a story about Wilbur and Charlotte's babies"). Most commonly, expressive writing concerns something the student knows and requires the student to move one step beyond that in writing. In social study courses, expressive writing is found through assignments like "describe your town" when the student relies either on his or her sense of things, or uses oral information received from an adult. When a student is asked to describe in detail a science experiment, the same writing style is

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likely to be provoked. Unlike the formal prose paper, topics requiring an expressive response often evoke a sense of order. Organization of the writing may be chronological or logical and hence easier for the student writer. Rarely, however, do such assignments push the student to any experimentation with sentence structure, vocabulary and the like. This can in part be attributed to the lossely structured requirements found in assignments to which expressive writing is the response. Such assignments are often preceded by "describe" or "compare" as seen in these examples from an eighth grade social studies class: "describe the school as it was in 1950," and "compare your life now to that of your grandmother or grandfather when she or he was your age."

Most common in writing across the content areas is "response" writing--the fragmented one word or short answer generally required to adequately answer a question. This is used in all disciplines and is demonstrated in such answers as:

arithmetic:	56 miles 300 jelly beans 85 feet per hour
science:	oxygen green plants because they bare (sic) their young alive.
history:	1812 Andrew Jackson because of the cold Russian winters and all the soldiers starved.
physical education:	Love too close to the net when you step over the line when you serve
mechanical arts:	the turbine
foreign language:	el caballo

Response writing in all content areas is most similar to spoken English. Usually the written rsponse is identical to the oral response students would give if they were asked the same question in class. This kind of writing is the only one in which a student may be involved daily. It is employed through quizzes, mathematics homework assignments, answering the questions which follow a chapter or reading, laboratory reports, current events study, vocabulary study (both in English and foreign languages), and much more.

Much of this response writing has as its purpose some sort of evaluation. The response is usually of a right or wrong nature and is intended to show that the student either learned the fact or can compute the correct response. But given this, what is the teacher of social studies, of science, of French to consider in using writing in his or her class? Several points can be deducted from the information above: we can first consider anything "written down" as a starting point for teaching writing; we can look carefully at the kinds of questions which we expect students to answer; and we can look most carefully at what we expect from students by way of response.

In addition, we can reflect on the relationship of the oral answers we accept in the classroom and the written answers we accept on a quiz or test. Is writing really written speech? If that is the case, should we work on students' speaking habits as well? Without doubt, many students could use considerable practice on speaking in complete sentences, and that work might begin to increase the use of complete sentences in written work. But this is another topic: speaking in the content areas. For now, however, the focus will remain on writing.

For the content area teacher, the first question has to be "am I committed to teaching writing?" Requiring more papers or essay questions on tests or even written in-class assignments means a commitment to reading, and for some teachers, a commitment to considering for the first time the relation of the prose to the content. For most, however, considering writing involves more easily manageable issues.

First, the teacher should think over the curriculum for the year: what writing is expected? what kind of test and quiz responses? what kind of homework? projects? Then consider how much currently requires some kind of written response--even if it's one word. (If, however, the majority of questions can be answered in solely one word, perhaps there is an inadvertent over-emphasis on vocabulary, names or dates to the neglect of concepts or processes.) Consider how questions could be worked to require some explanations beyond just the answer. "36 miles," "in swampland," "hibernate," could become responses such as "because the train is traveling at rate x, and the car is traveling at rate y, to find out which would get there first, you need to apply this formula,..."or "reptiles aren't slimy, they're scaly."

Second, it is every bit as important to review and modify the instructions to the student as it is to ask questions to which a more than one word answer is appropriate. Students can be told to answer in complete sentences rather than one word or sentence fragments. (The teacher should review the criteria for a complete sentence when first requiring this.) Science reports, arithmetic anwers, and tests on basketball rules can all prove an aid to student writing if they begin by asking the student to write rather than fill in the blanks or respond with one word answers.

Crucial in the teaching of writing is an understanding of the process, a process Trollope said could not be done both well and easily. Part of that process is revision. In all subject matters, revision should be an expected procedure. With comments from the teacher or even from their peers, students can make revision a useful tool to further writing skills. For the classroom teacher who has not considered revision of student writing as part of his or her domain before, there are several methods of integrating revision into the curriculum. If a paper is due on a Friday, for example, the teacher could collect first drafts, due Tuesday, read only for questions of writing and the successful explanation of content, make suggestions and return papers to the students for revision. Comments which focus on writing skills are critical: organization, creating and sticking to some semblance of a thesis, using supporting details well, transitions between sentences and ideas, and the like. Another method is peer evaluation, successful in that students frequently write better for their friends than they do for their teachers. Here, either by breaking the class into small groups of three or four students or simply by trading papers, students can read and comment on each other's work. Initially, students need help in such evaluation; sometimes a check-off list of points to look for, or a focus provided by the teacher (find the thesis, then locate each topic sentence in the ensuring paragraphs--does each topic sentence support the thesis?) provides a concrete beginning. Again, when the first draft is due, have students proof each other's papers for simple spelling or punctuation errors. Teachers almost always feel compelled to fix these kinds of errors; often other students can "clean up" the final paper for teacher. These ideas are often useful for the teacher who is at a loss for a place to start in integrating writing skills with his or her discipline.

In addition, teachers often forget to use the reading of their disciplines as models for student writing. The styles appropriate to newspapers, to textbooks, to cookbooks and computer software manuals may provide good examples of proficient writing. Students rarely remember that someone wrote their books; taking time every now and again to look at the readings from a writer's standpoint can provide a

continuity in language use which we as teachers often neglect.

When these ideas--writing is inherent in a subject matter course; students can share writing with their peers; and the kind of writing students read in the course is "writing--when the ideas are introduced in the beginning of the course, practiced, refined, and accepted by students and the teacher alike, teachers will have begun to integrate writing across the content areas in the elementary program.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Mary by Mary E. Mebane.
Fawcett Juniper, 1982. 253 pp. $2.25.

Mebane's autobiographical novel is a historical and personal document of a young Black girl's growing up in defiance to a world waiting to limit her development as an individual. Born and raised in Durham, North Carolina, in 1933, Mary Mebane tells of her yearnings and attempts to become someone beyond the limited role presented by her rural Southern heritage. Reading books, excelling at school, playing the piano, Mary resists the stereotype of a poor, rural Black girl even if it means disobeying her mother Nonnie and alienating herself from her two brothers and her school friends. Because she wants a life beyond marriage, factory work, or children, Mary finds herself in a life-long struggle to overcome the loneliness that comes with "being different." "Historically," she tells us, "my lifetime is important because I was part of the last generation born into a world of total legal segregation in the Southern United States." Mary is a gently written true story of a Black American's quest for a better life. Although there is little suspense or any high tension action, this book can provide a reflective glimpse into someone's lifetime and a crucial, racially-conscious era in our history.

Reviewed by Norma D. Walrath, Ledyard High School, Ledyard, Ct.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Island Keeper by Harry Mazer.
Dell, 1982. 165 pp. $2.25.

Cleo Murphy is The Island Keeper. Isolated from her wealthy family while living at home, overweight and pampered Cleo chooses isolation on an island in a large lake in the Canadian wilderness. During the summer there she is able to put her life in perspective, deal with the earlier deaths of her mother and sister, Jam, and gain self-confidence. For the first time in her life, Cleo makes her own decisions. She adapts well to living off the land, and the island diet of berries, nuts, and fish slims her body. Because she is able to kill small animals and eventually a deer, she learns that she is a survivor. When she decides to return home and to civilization, the idyllic island becomes her enemy; a storm destroys her canoe and, with winter approaching, Cleo is unable to leave. The Island Keeper will appeal to the adolescent who likes stories that deal with internal and family conflicts, death, adventure, and physical survival. All readers will respect Cleo's ability to survive in the wilderness and marvel at her ingenuity in trying to escape from the island's isolation in the middle of winter.

Reviewed by Mary A. Brooks, H.C. Wilcox Regional Vocational Technical School, Meriden, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Conrad's War by Andrew Davies.
Dell, 1982. 144 pp. $1.95.

Conrad, a young boy given to building cardboard tanks and plastic bombers, suddenly finds himself, his father, and his dog in the place of his dreams--World War II. Conrad becomes a child warrior, surviving plane crashes, escaping Nazis, and battling the enemy at every turn in a war played for laughs. Walter Mitty has already taken us all over this familiar ground. Mitty could be anyone, be anywhere he wanted to be. More importantly, James Thurber had the style and wit to make his hero loveable to the reader, even though Walter couldn't fit into the daily grind. But Andrew Davies can't do the same with his character Conrad in this novel. Conrad's fantasy is a sugar-coated dream movie of war, that really makes no moral impact on Conrad or on any young reader of this novel. What always suffers in a gimmick novel of this type is any real portrayal of youth, dreams, and problems with real life. If only more pages were devoted to the true difficulties of an imaginative boy coping with a real world, then Conrad's War would have been memorable, instead of being a lost battle.

Reviewed by Joseph Calabro, Pomperaug High School, Southbury, CT.

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Teachers Are Real, Too

Alan C. Purves

When I read the call for manuscripts, for CEJ, my eye fell on the topic for the Spring 1983 issue, the description of which I quote in full.

> Spring 1983 issue: WRITING FOR REAL AUDIENCES (Deadline 1/1/82)
>
> The purpose of writing in the "real" world is to communicate with real readers. Do you know of a writing program, project, or assignment through which students create writing that is actually read by someone? What are some real audiences that students might reach? What problems arise? What are the benefits? What specific assignments lead up to such writing? How does one organize a student newspaper or literary magazine? What are some means of publishing student writing? Does finding real audiences require special funding? How much? Where do the funds come from?

I was struck by the statement because I had just finished looking at the results of a pilot study we have been conducting. In that study we asked secondary school students to write a letter of advice to a student two years younger than themselves on how to get good grades in composition. We asked this of students in three high schools in Central Illinois --one rural, and two in a small city--and also of students in schools in Finland, Australia, and Hungary.

The results of this study show remarkable consistency across students regardless of nationality or social class. They claim that good grades come from papers that are neat, have correct spelling, punctuation and usage, are handed in on time, have something to say, have good organization, and take the assignment seriously (no jokes, please).

When one considers those responses and compares them to one's sense of the "real audiences" as suggested in the call for papers--one assumes the editor meant audiences other than teachers--one notes that the criteria students see teachers using are most probably the criteria used by "real audiences." Remember the contest announcement, "Neatness and accuracy count?" Anyone who has written a committee report knows that the readers look for accuracy and correct spelling and grammar. They don't look for personal investment,

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creativity, or even deep and cogent thinking. Neatness and accuracy count.

Why have people in the profession denigrated the reality of teachers as audiences? Related to that question is one that concerns distinctions between school and the real world. Clearly for students school--any school--is the real world while they are in it. For many, like John Updike's Rabbit, it may be the only real world for many years.

As far as I know from my traffic with the corporate and political communities, that "real world" is not interested in journals, free-writing, or even expressive writing. Are the "experts" on writing seeking to make schools less real than they are currently perceived by the student responses I have examined? Traditionally schools have been concerned with writing for a general audience, the teacher, who represents a rational reader as well as a surrogate for the world of neatness, accuracy, and organization. They have been concerned with encouraging students to write not for specialist audiences or for themselves but for the general reader as represented by the teacher. They have seen instruction in writing as part of a broad instruction in intelligent communication.

The call for articles suggests that teachers of English should move from that general goal to the goal of preparing students to write for a plethora of specialized audiences. Such writing often communicates, but it does not communicate to a wide audience, primarily because it is not supposed to. If a person were to write a letter to a classical music station asking that certain compositions be played, a person unfamiliar with classical music would not be able to discern the writer's taste. Even notes such as one I received from a student

Dr. Purves--I was here where were you? Carolyn

does not communicate outside of a very specific occasion.

Paying so much attention to audience also seems to neglect too many other aspects of the task of writing and particularly the real task of school writing which concerns itself with sharpening skills in thinking, problem solving, organization, style, language, and form. There is no reason why schools should teach such narrow kinds of writing as the specialized letter or the note. On the contrary, schools, real institutions that they are, responsible for general education, should teach writing for general audiences represented by the real teacher.

Generating Excitement Through Writing to a Favorite Author

Anne B. Pfeiffer

In the lower grades, students copy sentences from the blackboard and are pleased to be able to read back what they have written. By the upper primary and intermediate grades, the students are seeing their work hung on the classroom wall or on the bulletin board in the main hall. But as they reach junior high school, they look for more than the teacher's response and a grade. They continue to write for the teacher because there is an assignment, but all too often the excitement and enthusiasm is not what it could be. The following assignment creates plenty of interest and excitement and always appeals to all of my students.

The first time I presented the assignment to a class, they became so exited that it was difficult to hold them to the step by step process which makes the resulting composition so much better. The second time I used the assignment, I did not tell the class what the ultimate goal was until after they had gathered some of the basic information.

The assignment was to write a letter to their favorite author or the author of their favorite book. I explained that for their letter to be interesting enough for a personal response from the author, they would have to make it special. They would have to be familiar not only with the book but with the author as well. In this way they could tie something about the author to themselves. I also wanted them to be able to ask some intelligent questions, ones the author would want to answer. (Publishers will always forward letters to their authors but usually the answers are form letters unless the author feels the letter deserves a personal response).

The first step was to find out about the author: where he grew up, when he started writing, whether he has a family, whether what he wrote reflected where he grew up, whether it reflected some personal experiences. We used many different sources for this information, all listed at the end of this article.

After gathering all this information the students reviewed it to discover whether some of it related to themselves in any way so that, when they did write, the letters would be more personal and important. The students were surprised to see, in many cases, how like themselves some of the authors were. Some came from similar parts of the country or were interested in sports, horseback riding, swimming or soccer. The students were amazed to find that several of the authors had actually been published when not much older than the

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students were now. They found that it was not difficult to find some common area or interest. By this time each student felt as if the author he was writing to was a real person. The excitement was still building.

The next step was to compose one or two important questions which the student really wanted answered. Questions such as "How many books have you written?" or "When did you start writing?" were not acceptable since that kind of information could be easily found in the card catalogue or the author biographies. After several false starts and many groans as I crossed out unimportant or irrevelent questions, most students came up with questions that were intelligent and often sensitive. Ones that I wouldn't be ashamed to ask myself. My pride was growing!

In the last part of the letter, the students had to explain to the author why they liked a particular book or section. This was easy since all book reports that the children wrote included an evaluation with specific examples from the text. They simply referred to an important or significant chapter or scene and discussed it briefly in the letter.

Once all this was done, the students started writing the letters, putting all the parts together in an organized form. They were now actually "talking" to someone they really wanted to communicate with. Most students rewrote their letters several times to get them well organized and free of all errors. Some students brought in their own stationery. I supplied paper for the rest. Each student was responsible for producing an envelope and stamp.

The last step was to bring in a book by their author so that we could send the letter to the correct publisher. Some books contained the address of the publisher, but for those that did not I referred to Books in Print, which contains the names and addresses of all the publishers.

Before sending off the finished letters, I made a copy of each. If the students didn't get a response in a reasonable time, they could write again.

The total time spent on this assignment was about one week. Research and rough copies were done in the classroom as the students enjoyed sharing the information about authors with each other. They also spent a lot of time running back and forth to the library to look at book jackets and check publishers.

Responses were received, some as soon as one week. Answers ranged from publishers' letters informing the student that the author was no longer living to author's responses that were extremely sincere and personal.

Publishing the booklet was not a problem for us, since our parent organization, Area Cooperative Educational Services, has printing services available. We were able to have the booklet finished and in the hands of the students before the end of the year. The classmates improved their writing skills, projected a positive attitude toward their work, and drew together much of what they had learned during the year.

A similar project easily could be developed in less specialized situations. Freshmen, at the end of the year, could write a survival handbook for the incoming class. Seniors could prepare a handbook about options for the future. Students with special interests could write booklets about how to make it in band or sports. The key is to draw on common areas of expertise and to write for an assured audience that needs the proffered information.

This project could not have been completed without the assistance and patience of our librarian. The assignment was particularly successful in generating excitement and enthusiasm for writing and could be used by any grade level any number of times.

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PAPERBACK REVIEW

I'll Live by Stephen Manes.
Avon Flare, 1982. 157 pp. $2.25.

In an effort to grab a bigger share of the young adult book market, Avon has been publishing "original paperbacks." This particular original will not help Avon meet its objective. Dylan Donaldson, a California high school senior, is supposed to be the major character. It is the father, Al, however, who emerges as the protagonist. Al has cancer, is given six months to live, and decides to end his own life while he is still enjoying it. Despite the angry and persistent protestations of Dylan and his mother, Mr. Donaldson takes an overdose of sleeping pills and expires on his pre-selected death day, June 30. As a result of this tragedy, Dylan himself decides to call it quits, but he wants to go out in style--on his hang glider. In his death dive he suddenly catches sight of his former girlfriend (whom he had called earlier), changes his mind about dying, then crashes into the ground--nonfatally. The book does have merit because it delves into the territories of cancer and suicide. Older adolescents will probably like the book, and many will find it a touching story. The plot line and dialogue, however, may make some English teachers ill. Also, the author's use of third person narrator seems to make this potentially intimate story extremely impersonal.

Reviewed by Philip M. Connors, Kennedy Junior High School, Enfield, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Hand Me Down Kid by Francine Pascal.
Dell Yearling, 1982. 172 pp. $1.75.

Eleven-year-old Ari is quite a "sad sack." Her older brother and sister pick on her; her friend Rhona bullies her; her clothes are "hand-me-downs"; and she seems to cry at the slightest provocation. Luckily, into her life comes plucky Jane, who teaches Ari how to deal with her emotions when she is (frequently) upset. This helps Ari when she accidentally causes her sister's new bicycle to be stolen and then pretends ignorance of the situation. Though the dialogue is witty, this is a tepid story with a contrived plot and stock characters: understanding parents, cranky sister, kindly policeman. With the novel's examination of thievery, sibling rivalry, rampant pubescent emotions, ethnic prejudice, and sexual development, one would expect an exciting novel for middle school readers. But these "hot" issues are merely obvious spices not well integrated into this story of a young girl learning self-assertion.

Reviewed by John Barnes, Turn of River Middle School, Stamford, CT.

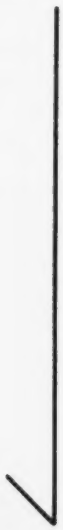
Increasing the Reality of Audiences in Classrooms

Donald A. McAndrew

The real audience in the classroom is the teacher. Let's admit that up front. The teacher in his/her role as teacher-as-grader, or teacher-as-examiner as James Britton (1975) phrases it, is always and inescapably the audience for class assignments. But if we are to improve our students, writing skills, we must, paradoxically, try to escape the teacher-as-grader audience; we must try to create situations that allow students to experience writing to a variety of audiences even though we know, and the students know, that somewhere down the line the teacher will be the audience. In a way, we have to run away from our students, getting so far away that perspective shrinks us almost to nothing. In this article, I would like to highlight some of the landmarks on this journey away from the teacher audience towards real audiences in the real world. Figure 1 is a map of that journey, a diagram of writing tasks which have an audience that is progressively further removed from the teacher in the classroom and closer to the real audiences of the real-world. Teachers who want to create real audiences should choose their tasks as close to the bottom of Figure 1 as possible or at least move in that direction whenever possible.

FIGURE 1

THE RANGE OF REAL AUDIENCE TASKS



TOPIC-ONLY TASKS. Where does the journey to real audiences begin? It begins, as Figure 1 shows, at traditional writing tasks that only specify a topic. these tasks can be as simple as a direct statement of the subject, "The arms race," to a several paragraph description as below.

> Many people today are very seriously concerned about the arms race between the super powers. They see this arms race as the first step in world annihilation. The arms race is a race to the nuclear holocaust.
>
> Other people see the arms race as the only way to insure peace. Unless the super powers are equal

---

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in their weapons, one may be tempted to attack the other. This attack is much less likely if both sides know they are equal.

In a short essay, state your view of the arms race. It can be either of the views above or some middle-of-the-road view. Whatever your view, state it as clearly as you can.

In both of these tasks, the audience is not described, so students will assume the audience to be the normal audience of schools, the teacher. They will assume "the classroom context" that their previous school has shown to be the most common. Consistently using these topic-only tasks allows students to experience only school writing; yet, theorists call for the development of students' ability to adapt to a variety of audiences (Moffett, 1968; Britton, 1975), and researchers report the importance of audience when writing outside school (Odell and Goswami, 1982). Awareness of this theory and research is the first step towards creating real audiences for student writing.

RHETORICAL CONTEXT TASKS. One of the first ways to move toward real audiences is to supply, in the writing task itself, a description of a specific rhetorical context, a specific audience and purpose for the piece, as in the task below:

The editor of the student newspaper has just announced the annual contest to choose the "Man or Woman of the Year." The winner can be any man or woman from any walk of life, and he/she will receive a silver plaque and a check for $1,000, both of which will be presented as the highlight of the annual commencement in May.

You know of a man or woman who you think is very deserving of the award. Since the editor will decide who the winner is, she has asked for letters of nomination for possible winners.

You decide to write, and you think you have a better-than-average chance to persuade the editor to choose your nominee because you know the editor. Her name is Cathy, and you grew up in the same neighborhood; you even went to the same elementary school. The editor was two years ahead of you, so you didn't know her really well. But you do remember that even then she was interested in writing because she was the editor of the elementary school's literary magazine. Now you are both in the same psychology class. You know from listening to the editor before the class that she is very career oriented; for her, to be a successful journalist is of the utmost importance. You also know that she is pleasant and mixes well with the other students. As far as who she thinks might be deserving of "Man or Woman of the Year" award, you remember her saying that great

> people do what is required of them and do it well, but they also do more and do that still better.
>
> With this in mind, write your letter of nomination to the editor making the best possible argument for the man or woman of your choice. Try your best to persuade the editor to choose the man or woman you pick as the "Man or Woman of the Year." If you convince the editor, you'll have the satisfaction of watching the man or woman you believe to be most deserving receive the award during the commencement in May.

This sort of task presents the student with a real-world situation in which he/she will have to convey content and language appropriate to the context of the task. All real writing occurs in a context, and this type of task attempts to create a life-like context for instructional purposes. However, recent research (Woodworth and Keech, 1980; McAndrew, 1982) has shown that merely telling students to write to the audience of the task may not be enough to overcome the power and persistence of the teacher audience.

CASES. A way to begin to overcome this power and persistence may be to use cases as writing tasks. Cases are highly focused, extended real-world situations, some to twenty or more pages (Field and Weiss, 1979). Students must assume a role or roles that require writing, especially writing similar to that which predominates outside schools--reports, proposals, speeches, memos, condensations and the like. The difference between cases and rhetorical context is one of both degree and kind. Where a rhetorical context task asks the student to address an audience for a given purpose and, thereby, adopt the written voice of an appropriate persona, a case asks a student to become one or more specific persons and to, then, play those persons throughout a given situation that requires several pieces of writing.

A typical case might ask a student to play the role of the superintendent of a local school system who must dismiss a probationary teacher based on a report and evaluations filed by a school principal. After extensively detailing this situation along with reproducing copies of the cover letters, report and evaluations, the case might then ask the superintendent to write a memo to the principal for clarification of the request for dismissal. Then, after supplying the clarifying information from the principal, the case asks the superintendent to write a formal statement of reprimand and dismissal recommendation to the teacher. The teacher responds with a grievance request and a hearing is held. The student is finally asked to write (as chair of the Grievance Committee) the decision notification to the teacher and the final report to the superintendent. In this typical case, the student writes four different types of writing to three different audiences. The extent and complexity

of cases places the teacher audience further into the background and moves the student further toward real audiences.

SIMULATION GAMES. This movement is continued as the element of staged dramatic role-playing is now layered on to the complexity of the case. The result is a simulation game (Troyka and Nudelman, 1975; Symes, 1973), a replication of a real context that requires the students to publicly play assigned roles while other students play still other roles, creating a life-like staged episode that assigns students a variety of real world tasks which address the complex and varied audiences created by the game.

In a typical simulation game, one based on the teacher dismissal case presented above, students assume the roles of superintendent, principal, teacher, Grievance Committee chair, the teachers' union representative, and perhaps fellow teachers, the president of the PTA and anyone else who might have an interest in the dismissal. In cases, all students play the same role, a useful strategy that allows many comparisons about how to write the most effective piece given the contextual constraints. In simulation games, a single student or a small group of students play one of several or many roles. This allows for a good deal of audience awareness and discussion as each role can discuss the perspectives of each of the other roles, in the hope of sensitizing students to the complexity of many audiences in the real world.

The classroom is arranged to look like a hearing room, and the hearing is held, chaired by the Grievance Committee. Position papers are presented and documented; then a decision statement followed by appropriate memos and reports is filed with appropriate groups who respond if desired. The game ends when the real-world situation would end.

All of the above activities, topic-only tasks, rhetorical context tasks, cases and simulation games, share one common feature. They all begin and end in the classroom; they never escape the classroom context. As complicated and life-like as a simulation game may be, it is still an exercise in imagination. The audience is still the guy who sits next to the student in geometry or the girl who rides on the student's bus. If we are to truly address the question of real audiences, shouldn't we give students <u>real</u> audiences? Obviously, to do this we must escape the classroom and address audiences outside. Schools have encouraged two activities of this type for many years, namely, the student newspaper and literary magazine. Students who write for these publications know they are writing for their peers, for their teachers and administrators, and for their parents, the school board or any member of the community at large who might be inclined to read their writing. This is an audience that is certainly well beyond the teacher-as-grader, but is it

really beyond the school context since the vast majority of readers are directly connected with the school? Student newspapers and magazines go well beyond the classroom context and move out into the world beyond but stop at the boundary of the school context. This is also true for attempts many teachers have made to publish student writing. Class booklets or magazines are infrequently circulated beyond the school. Again, they widen the audience for classroom writing, but they do not go beyond the context of the school. No matter how real and varied that context may seem to a student writer, it is still a school context, a context one step short of the world beyond school.

SCHOOL/WORLD TASKS. The first true real world audience occurs with activities that begin in the classroom and end in the world beyond school; the audiences for these tasks are individuals or groups in the real world.

Letters of all types are a convenient, familiar way to have students write directly to a real audience outside school. Many teachers have had their students write letters to the editor of the local paper. Not only do students write to a real audience, but some will have the thrill of seeing their letter in print, maybe stimulating still other letters to the editor, surely being read by teachers, neighbors and relatives. Students could also be asked to write fan letters to favorite musicians or athletes or letters of complaint to businesses or government. Responses from musicians, athletes, businesses and government agencies could be shared in class, further concretizing the reality of the audience and stimulating more letter writing. Students can also expect responses if they write letters requesting many of the free or inexpensive materials available from the government or business. The government publishes Consumer Information (Government Printing Office, 1982), a catalogue of their free and inexpensive publications, and 1001 Valuable Things You Can Get for Free (Weisinger, 1980) lists sources from business and industry. Personal letters, of course, are always an exercise in writing to a real audience, and teachers can ask students to write to friends or relatives. Letters are so familiar to students that teachers can easily and quickly utilize them in writing to audiences beyond the classroom or school context, as witnessed by P.S. Write Soon!, a guide full of informtion about letter writing, by the National Council of Teachers of English and the U.S. Postal Service.

Other writing tasks that begin in school but culminate in the real world are the essays, fiction or poetry written for student writing contests sponsored by a variety of organizations. The student who works on these tasks knows that the teacher is only a guide, a facilitator, because the ultimate audience, the real audience, is the judge or committee of judges of the sponsoring organization. A similar real

audience can be the editor of teen fashion or rock magazines. Some accept submission of articles and even pay on publication. Still others mostly local or regional, are almost exclusively articles submitted by student writers.

WORLD/WORLD TASKS. Letters, contest writings and articles for submission to magazines all give the student a chance to write for real audiences in the real world. They are initiated in school but culminate in the real world. That fact suggests that the final, logical step in the journey to real audiences must be tasks that are both initiated and culminated in the real world, in other words, tasks that are initiated not by teachers but by the students' real lives. The ultimate real audience is that of real writing situations. Teachers can neither assign nor create these tasks; students must. The initiative must be from the writer writing in the context of his/her personal real world. Students must be encouraged to find real writing occasions in their own lives, and teachers must play the role of the audience for the occasion, giving feedback as the audience and also as a writing expert. Teachers will also have to point out writing occasions in students' lives because students write so infrequently that writing occasions are barely visible to them. For example, when a student is overheard complaining that his/her new video game computer is broken, the teacher could allow class time for that student to work individually on a letter of complaint. These types of writing tasks would address each student as an individual and would be invested with the real motivation of the real occasion. Teachers could then confer with each student and could act as both audience and writing experts. The writing situation would be real and individually meaningful; it would be the ideal time to teach the skill and adapting content and language to a given real audience. Students could describe the context of their situation, the teacher could continue to question them to draw out the details and implications of the context, and then the teacher could respond like the audience and help with drafting and revision as a writing expert.

Finally, and practically, these world/world tasks that are initiated and culminated in the student's personal real world occur all too infrequently, certainly not frequently enough to be the center of writing instruction, the heart but not the center. What then, given the variety of activities suggested above, would constitute the best procedure for a teacher to follow when trying to create real audiences in classrooms? I believe the procedure would have three parts. First, simulation games would probably be the center. They most closely create the real world with its complexity of data and audiences. As training activities they allow for a good deal of practice and discussion of audience adaptation skills. Second, arising from these games or as a supplement to them, teachers could devise the kinds of school/world

tasks that allow for the experience of real audiences under the stimulus and control of the teacher. And, third, teachers could point out writing occasions in their students' real worlds. This mixture of imagined audiences in simulation games, real audiences in school/world tasks devised by the teacher, and real audiences in real situations should do much to develop the sensitivity to audiences that is the hallmark of the competent writer.

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PAPERBACK REVIEW

Second Star to the Right by Deborah Hautzig.
Avon Flare, 1982. 151 pp. $1.95.

As a child Leslie Hiller would often dream of flying off with her beloved Peter Pan to her own perfect world somewhere near "the second star to the right." This provocative novel takes us with Leslie on her later flight from her Central Park West environs to the pathetically distorted world of anorexia nervosa. What makes this talented, attractive, and affluent fourteen-year-old choose such a self-destructive path? Wisely, the author supplies no easy answers, preferring to scatter clues to Leslie's bizarre behavior like crumbs for us to snatch up as we wend our way through the dense forest of Leslie's troubled mind. There's the matter of Leslie's cousin, a victim of a concentration camp who died rather than leave her mother...there's Leslie's own mother, loving, popular with Leslie's friends, and so unselfish (a martyr?)...there's Leslie's consuming resolve to be "in control" of her life.... Credibly narrated in the first person, the novel makes us Leslie's confidants as she admits to the tiredness, the "blue fingers," and the apathy of the anorexic: "Will I make it to the bus stop or fall dead?" The book is smoothly written and quite easy to read, with glimpses of New York City providing an interesting backdrop for the conflict between Leslie and the "dictator" inside who forbids her to eat. It is a special tribute to the skill of the author that the heroine, despite her advantages, is never too remote for the teen reader to identify with. Her pain is all too real.

Reviewed by Barbara Guerra, Newington High School, Newington, CT.

Book Critics Apply Here!

Barbara Leigh Laurain

How many times has an English techer assigned a composition only to be asked, "You're not going to read this out loud, are you?" When the teacher says, "No," the student breathes a sigh of relief, sets pen to paper and dashes off several nearly comprehensible sentences. In this and almost every other instance, the student realizes that the only real audience is the teacher. I happily stumbled upon an exercise that combines writing for real audiences, producing a book report and creating an invaluable tool for both the librarian and those who use the library. Not only that, the students were very excited about doing it.

Frustrated by the poor selection of young adolescent novels in the school library, I was searching for a new, ingenious way of doing the standard, old book report along with devising some method of updating the library's selection of book titles. My solution was to ask my students to play the role of book critic, except they weren't playing, they really would be critiquing!!

Each student was required to select a book from the school library dealing with a modern teen-age problem. While reading the novel, the students were to maintain a critical viewpoint as to the author's presentation of the problem and its solution. Upon completion of the book, each student was to write a brief summary of the problem, a brief description of the solution and a more detailed critique of the book as a whole. The critique itself included commentaries on illustrations, book flaps and book covers along with the author's treatment of the subject matter. Finally, the student was to give some sort of recommendation of the book to an appropriate audience. This constituted the book report which I graded. However, the real purpose of having students comment on these areas was to force them to have a personal opinion about the book.

On the due date of the book report, each student filled out a questionnaire which asked information similar to that in the book report but in an abbreviated form. The author of the form could remain anonymous, but the form would be part of a compilation of critiques placed in a loose-leaf notebook in the library for the librarian and prospective readers. The notebook format allowed flexibility for additions and deletions, making the project on-going and current.

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Students were very enthusiastic and excited about writing critiques which would be read by people other than the teacher and that would serve a useful purpose. In fact, many students read extra books so that they could fill out more book critique forms. The forms were received by the librarian as a way of "weeding out" unpopular books. An adjunct to this project, still in formation, is to extend this project to include critiques of books not in the library. Those critiques will be reviewed by the librarian with the anticipation of ordering new books to update the library. Thus, from the frustration of "worn-out" book report themes and dull library selections sprang a writing project that allows students to write for real audiences and helps the school improve the library.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

A Place Apart by Paula Fox.
Signet Vista, 1982. 152 pp. $1.95.

A Place Apart is a realistic, well-written "coming of age" book in which a thirteen-year-old, Victoria Finch, learns one of the most difficult lessons of adulthood: life is not simple, easily planned, and readily comprehensible. The book begins with Victoria's asking her uncle if she will ever understand what life is all about. He replies, "In flashes, a glimpse when you least expect it." There is little external action in the story. Victoria and her mother sell their home in Boston and move to a small town soon after her father's sudden death. There Victoria befriends Hugh Todd, a sensitive, artistic, urbane young man, and adopts his psuedo-sophisticated way of looking at life. Eventually, as a result of Hugh's cruelty toward another friend, Victoria understands that we cannot judge ourselves and others according to some arbitrary standard of perfection. We are all weak at times; we all have our problems; we each occupy "a place apart" from the rest of humanity. Our only hope is to accept ourselves and each other for what we are. A Place Apart is a quiet, thought-provoking work, reminiscent of Knowles' A Separate Peace. It will appeal primarily to those students who can handle psychological rather than action-packed novels.

Reviewed by Jacqueline Farrell, Schaghticoke Middle School, New Milford, CT.

Letters Create Audience Awareness

Michael J. Melerski

In this article, I want to tell beleaguered writing teachers what they can do on Monday morning without compromising recent research, current discourse theory, or personal convictions about the teaching of writing. The single strongest advantage of my suggestion is that for the entire week of the writing activity, a real audience will be prominent in the minds of your student writers. But, since I am not proposing anything as elaborate as a writing program, I feel teachers may not think, act or teach any differently unless they can perceive some truth--some good news in my suggestions which are really about altering audience for student writers.

THE GOOD NEWS

In the past, each time I have implemented this writing sequence a burst of up to a thousand words has been possible for many students. In my high school, I rate this a success. In addition, many writers show a renewed concern for the formalities--handwriting, neatness, spelling, word choice and punctuation. A few writers voluntarily continue beyond the week of required writing. Occasionally, a student or two will assume some unusual persona in his or her writing. All participating students will have their writing read and will eagerly read the work of their peers, even to the point of registering disappointment at not having a piece to read.

While the writing is in progress, my own role is minimal relative to that assumed during other writing tasks, yet once students overcome the initial inertia of the situation, they generally persist willingly; and they compose, read with care the writing of others, sometimes even aloud to classmates, respond again in writing and await further responses to their own writing. Regular feedback is provided for every piece written even though teachers correct nothing and read very little. However, from spot-check readings I have done in the past, I know that the writing voices adopted by my student writers during this sequence are among the strongest and most distinctive of the entire year. Lastly, most students will not require a full period every day during the week, so they can also be expected to continue working on other separate but concurrent classroom activities which are not tied directly to the serial writing task, such as sentence combining exercises or sustained silent reading.

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SUGGESTION

Learning psychologists have demonstrated that unscheduled rewards rank among the most powerful of motivators, so I am suggesting that all of us who teach writing involve our students in letter writing exchanges, especially since we know three things: first, relevant topics alone do not turn students into writers; second, providing prompt, meaningful feedback is a Herculean effort; and third, writers often ignore urging to reread, revise and rewrite. I realize that the term letter writing exchange may not sound innovative or exciting, but it can produce, as I have indicated, a quantity of intense writing--a sudden eruption of real writing intended for an audience other than the all too customary audience, teacher-as-judge. Originally, I experimented with this method because of Dr. Kenneth Hennig, a junior college teacher, who declared letter exchanges among his most successful semester-long writing assignments. I adapted his strategies with satisfying results, and I hope others will continue by adapting the serial writing task I am about to describe.

MECHANICS

To begin, a typical exchange should be announced and started suddenly on a Monday with a directive that it will continue "at least until Friday" at which time it may be permitted to die a peaceful death, although only the cooperating teachers need know this initially. Because speed of response is crucial at the beginning of the exchange, I have always matched my students with those of another teacher who can assure prompt delivery of mail to his or her students and return mail for my students to receive on Tuesday. Students are given identification numbers to use in their complimentary close and also in the saluatation, since they are going to be paired with students in another teacher's class. The same identification number is written on the outside of each letter for delivery purposes and is used throughout the exchange. I usually assign all boys in my first period class an even number and a suffix letter B to indicate boy. The cooperating teacher, who is aware of the identification method, distributes the letters to his second period class, perhaps matching my boys with his girls. But in any case, if a student belonging to the other teacher receives a letter from a 2B from my class, then that number automatically becomes her own identification number for the duration of the exchange. This cumbersome preoccupation with numbers is due to the fact that I always direct students to write whatever they wish but to maintain secrecy, to give no names or initials. Students will frequently play detective, but my exercise indicates that early discovery can signifantly reduce student interest and so I insist on anonymity.

When some students object that they have nothing to say to anyone known only as 2B or 3G, I merely explain that this first letter is like an introduction to any

stranger; I also suggest that writers ask and try to anticipate questions. I try to emphasize quantity in the first letter, informing students to save all incoming mail which they can number first, second, etc., not because I wish to read their mail, but because I can evaluate their participation in the exchange partly on the number and length of pieces of mail accumulated and partly on the degree of participation I will be able to observe through the week and beyond in a few cases.

I turn the outgoing letters over to the other teacher as soon as feasible, but usually on Tuesday I feign a new assignment so that one of my students can "remind" me by asking for the incoming letters. Here, student enthusiasm begins to peak; on Wednesday and Thursday it levels off. We have a daily mail call including the Monday following the first week, so students write every day for a minimum of five consecutive classes which I think is yet another unusual but valuable aspect of these exchanges.

PROBLEMS

It is appropriate to anticipate and minimize the problems which can arise. The first is a logistics problem. Teachers need a list of numbers (perhaps right in their plan books) to either remind students or to take steps when students are absent. I ask for volunteers to write explanations when classmates are absent. Whenever classes don't match evenly, I have always found it possible to get individual students to write to several others in the larger class, but we never divide classes.

The second problem is the genuine dissatisfaction which may develop between paired writers. I have offered an option requiring the students to match their unsatisfactory partners with someone else within their own group; all parties must accept the swap and no one is permitted to discontinue writing without consulting the teachers.

The final problem is the most feared among all those teachers with whom I have discussed the exchange: obscenity. The potential is present, but can be negated if the danger is met head-on, by issuing strong warnings before students write. I normally tell students that I do not intend to read letters unless a receiving student complains about language or content in the letters. The rights of privacy are respected, but obscenity brings an immediate loss of rights. The offended party can be given a new partner; the offender can be given a zero, or parents can be informed, or school regulations, if they exist, can be invoked. This problem is best avoided by serious admonitions, at the outset, especially to the more immature classes, then swift penalties for the first violations. This part is going

to be a judgment call for teachers, but I believe in letter exchanges as much as I do in protecting my sensitive and vulnerable students. Finally, the positive behaviors have always, in my judgment, far outweighed the risks.

Someday, I am going to conduct an exchange with our sister high school, and I am also going to try to get an exchange going with inmates at Attica State Prison. But, tomorrow morning, the first day back after the Christmas recess, I am going to start an exchange and suggest that my students focus on New Year's resolutions if they are stuck for a topic.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Girl Who Wanted A Boy by Paul Zindel.
Bantam, 1982. 123 pp. $2.25.

Fifteen-year-old Sibella Cametta is desperate. More than anything else she wants a boyfriend. Finally, while reading the local paper, she sees a photograph of the boy. She locates him and stalks him like a hunter in pursuit of a prize big-game animal. His name is Dan Douglas, and he works at a sleazy amusement center. Because Sibella is a mechanical wizard who can repair anything, she assumes that she can engineer a loving relationship with Dan. Dan, however, rejects her as a "flake," adding to her feelings of isolation and insecurity. Sibella's divorced mother and man-crazy older sister are of no help. Although Sibella's father is somewhat more sympathetic and supportive, he tends to say the wrong thing at the wrong time. In a final, desperate effort to win Dan's love, Sibella buys him an expensive surfer van with money she has been saving for years. When this fails, Sibella contemplates suicide, but, in a dramatic conclusion to the novel, decides not to go through with it. Compared with the emotions explored in the bulk of the novel, the ending is somewhat glib. While this novel is different from other books by Zindel, the characterization here tends to be flat and the story-line predictable. Although the book may have its theraputic uses for some adolescents, it tends to be downbeat with many dark, pessimistic images and scenes.

Reviewed by Richard H. Gray, Enfield High School, Enfield, CT.

Peer Conferencing To Teach Audience

Kathryn Chesley

I've worked in speech communication at the high school level for ten years and for all of those years I taught students how to deal with the oral language and get their ideas across. We spent many classroom hours discussing how to present ideas to an audience, be it a group of people or a single individual. All students were required to present themselves and their ideas to the rest of the class. Oh, the fear I instilled in students with that! They would have to present their ideas to their peers in class for a grade, which would, in part, be determined by the class. Thus, the concept of audience became a primary focus of our attention. Because of the immediate feedback of oral communication, students were concerned with their audience rapport: "How can I keep my friends (or enemies) from laughing at me? What can I say or do to keep their attention for a whole five minutes? What's the best way to gain attention right from the beginning? How can I say it so my audience will understand what I'm getting at? How do I get out of the subject, just stop talking?"

Tied into the concept of audience was the idea of purpose. "Other than for a grade, why am I doing this? What do I want my audience to do because of my talk? What am I trying to say about my topic? The purpose for talking became much more understandable and useful to the students because they could picture themselves standing at the front of the class, talking, and getting some kind of a response from the "audience" regarding their "topic." They hoped the response would be positive, and this positive reaction would come more assuredly when the speaker paid attention to the concept of audience and had a specific purpose in mind. The idea of audience and topic became a concept that students could relate to immediately. This audience awareness created some memorable classroom moments for many of my students. Their talks were lively and full of fascinating stories and interesting information. Plus, they got lots of immediate feedback from a responsive audience.

Yet when I then turned to the rest of the language arts curriculum and asked students to communicate on paper, I was faced with dry, soulless compositions. The same group who could present their ideas in such a lively way orally, died on paper. Because I was dealing with the "written" language, I dug out all of my "written" language ideas to improve student writing. For me this meant grammar. I gave students adjective exercises so they could add

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color. Well, I got color all right, but no depth. Then transitions were the answer! Sure, smoother papers make for clearer ideas. The results were smooth papers like glass, but the glass was opaque.

It finally occurred to me (this was not as simple as it sounds) that these papers did not communicate. No one made an effort to get my attention right from the start, no one cared if I laughed at them or scorned them, few cared if I truly understood their ideas. I felt unimportant. Why didn't I make a difference as an audience? Maybe my students never saw me as an audience as they had seen their peers. They certainly never saw me react to their papers. Oh I spilled "red blood" all over their work, commenting on this, correcting that; sometimes I felt that I put more effort in my comments than they did in the whole paper. For them, it seemed that the written word was not as powerful as the instantaneous feedback of the oral word.

The solution, as I saw it, was to make the students first aware of the fact that I too was an audience and that each piece of writing needs a clear direct purpose. Every time I made an assignment, I clarified it. "Tell me the funniest thing that ever happened to you. Your purpose is to tell me what happened and make me laugh."

Furthermore, since the concept of audience is so easily identifiable in the oral mode, I asked my students to test out their papers on a peer or two first--a sort of conferencing session (2-5 students). I always gave these mini-conference sessions something very specific to work on. Conferencing sessions can be held in several ways. One way is to run off a supply of dittos which look like this:

1. Name _____
   Type of Writing_____
   Question_____
   Comment:

2. Question_____
   Comment:

I can fit four of these questions/comment groups on one ditto. In class, each student gets a ditto and fills it in. Since the conferencing questions are different for each session, depending on what concepts I am dealing with, the blank question spaces are easier to work with. The student merely fills in some specific questions. Since this lesson teaches the concepts of audience and purpose, I would ask students to fill in the following questions:

This is to get two different views.

1. Is the purpose of the paper clear? Write what you think the purpose of the paper was.
2. Is the purpose of the paper clear? Write what you think the purpose of the paper was.
3. What was the most interesting part of the paper? Why?
4. Is there any section which could be made clearer?

The students are then instructed to get into groups of 2-5 people, depending on class size. For groups of five, each student, one at a time, first tears apart each question from the ditto, then gives one question to each of the other four members in the group. The student then reads his/her paper aloud to the other members who listen first, then comment in writing on the comment sheets. A discussion follows. The rest of the group can agree or disagree on the written comments. All comment sheets are then given to the student who read to have a permanent record of what was said. In small groups (2-3) each student can comment on two questions, or the number of questions handled in one conferencing session can be reduced. Therefore, group size and number of question can vary depending on class size, time and concepts at hand.

Of all of the concepts discussed in these conferencing sessions not one meant as much as the fact that the student's paper was to be presented to an audience in a conferencing situation. Students were fully aware that their papers were to be read aloud to test out their effectiveness before they were rewritten to be handed in. The whole purpose of the reading was to improve the content of the paper, therefore the conferencing sessions and my comments afterwards applied to the content of the paper only. Grammatical difficulties are another problem, taken care of at another time. (However, grammar and usage can be taken care of in the same way; just change the class questions to deal with grammar: Are all words spelled correctly? Is all punctuation correct?)

When a student was asked to read his/her paper aloud to an audience, which in this case was another student, the student's concept of writing as communication became much clearer. The audience is an oral situation with immediate feedback produced talks with lots of life and color. In much the same way when students were asked to share written thoughts orally, in the privacy of a small conference, their writing took on a whole new flair. The result was papers that had something to say and that said it in a clear, effective and, sometimes, thought provoking way.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Vision Quest by Terry Davis.
Bantam Windstone, 1981. 197 pp. $2.50.

This book was never marketed as a young adult novel, and in many ways it isn't; it contains some explicit sex and is more sophisticated than most YA books. But a friend of mine last year suggested it to one of her most reluctant high school students, a jock in a remedial reading class, after which it became the most popular book in the school. Not because of the sexual aspects, but because of its unprecedented examination of the feelings of a high school wrestler, Louden Swain, an eighteen-year-old on the edge of manhood. Through his own words and insights, we experience Swain's painful efforts to attain and maintain his wrestling weight of 147 pounds, feel his desire for recognition, and share his unquenchable fascination with life, love and literature as he prepares for a championship match. Here is a protagonist with confidence and humor in a book about one of those rare times in life when everything comes together, when the time, the place, mind and body and stars are all aligned and you feel unconquerable. Sensitive high school male athletes should find it irresistable and reassuring.

Reviewed by Don Gallo, CCSC.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Only Love by Susan Sallis.
Dell, 1982. 251 pp. $2.50.

While the ALA has rated Only Love a Best Book for Young Adults, I suspect that this English novel will never be popular with American readers. It has no clearly defined audience. Aspects of it are too mature for middle school readers while its contrived plot and pat solutions are too simplistic for high school readers. At times, Sallis describes her characters in a style reminiscent of the forties. Only Love tells of the final six months in the life of Fran Adamson, a sixteen-year-old orphan paralyzed from the waist down since birth. The setting is an expensive, residential, rehabilitation center where the heroine meddles creatively in the lives of fellow patients and staff, and has a bittersweet and fanciful romance with another patient. Only Love is not maudlin and saccharine; neither is it memorable or moving. English terms get in the way on occasion. I found Sallis's tendency to dwell on the way Fran put on her jeans and on Fran's incontinence (a quick skimming turned up over a dozen references to the latter) annoying. The subject of terminal illness in teenagers is covered more meaningfully and realistically in other novels.

Reviewed by Marion Bradley, North Branford High School, North Branford, CT.

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Writing a Corporate Style Manual

Stephen T. Moskey and Mark N. O'Brien

Abstract. This article describes the development and writing of The AEtna Manual of Style. It provides information on the background and setting of the project and explains the six phases of the manual's development: needs assessment, content design, writing, editing and revision, field testing, and design and production. The article then suggests ways that English teachers might build a writing course around a similar concept.

BACKGROUND

In the late 1960s, the Personnel Department of AEtna Life and Casualty published The Secretary's Handbook: A Guide for Typists and Secretaries (SH), a loose-leaf binder containing 100 pages of information on letter formats, punctuation, abbreviations, telephone etiquette, forms of address, etc. At that time, the company was initiating "administrative training," and the SH was intended--in part--to take the place of classroom training in secretarial techniques and procedures. While the SH contained much valuable information, its strong secretarial focus and the fact that it contained information quickly outdated in a company the size of AEtna (e.g. forms, accounting procedures), limited its practicality and relevance to the company as a whole. Further, in an age of sensitivity to job and sexual stereotyping, employees were reluctant to own a volume with the word secretary imprinted boldly on its cover.

In 1976, the Customer Service Department of AEtna's Casualty Division produced the prototype of a self-study writing course, How to Write a More Effective Letter. Eventually, responsibility for that course and the others that followed (Writing for Business, Vocabulary Enrichment, Spelling Power, Language Skills Refresher) was transferred to the Education Programs Department, the forerunner of the AEtna

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Institute for Corporate Education. Experience with these self-study and tutor-assisted courses showed, however, that the employees who went through them still had many questions about English style and grammar. Additionally, the many thousands of employees who would never take a writing course also needed access to information about style, usage, format, and grammar. There were no resources for that information other than the SH and a dictionary.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In the fall of 1980, Steve Moskey, then AEtna's Writing Consultant, began a needs assessment and feasibility study involving three major phases: (1) analyzing hundreds of employee writing samples and summarizing major mechanical and stylistic problems; (2) reviewing the scope, content, and effectiveness of the SH; and (3) surveying a group of 30 professional editors and writers employed by AEtna Life and Casualty to solicit their opinions of the SH and to generate support for an alternative to it. The study continued into the spring of 1981. In June of that year, Steve submitted a report to AEtna management pointing out the company's writing needs, describing the shortcomings of the SH, and outlining the scope and content of his resulting proposal--the creation of a new AEtna Manual of Style. Management accepted the proposal and appointed Steve Editor-in-Chief of the new manual.

CONTENT DESIGN

In the late summer 1981, using a preliminary draft of the table of contents as a subject outline, Steve sketched out the level of detail and kinds of examples which would satisfy the needs of employees who write as a regular part of their jobs. Although the manual would by design include explanations of mechanics, style, and some areas of usage, Steve's guiding principle was the clarity of the examples. The need for clarity was based on two assumptions. First, while employees would probably read the rule or explanation the first time they looked up a particular point, subsequent references to the same point would probably focus on the example itself rather than the explanation. (This is especially true in cases of spacing, certain uses of quotation marks, letter and memo formats, etc.) Second, employees with poor reading skills might have difficulty following detailed grammatical or usage explanations, no matter how clearly written. Therefore, a clear "picture" of the rule's application would be worth the proverbial thousand words.

FIRST DRAFT

Once the content design was complete, the project was turned over to a free-lance writer who, working under Steve's direction, prepared a first draft of the manual. Before

beginning each new chapter, the writer discussed with Steve the particular emphases of that chapter. Once the first draft was completed, Steve edited and commented on it; subsequent discussion with the writer refined the presentation further, and the draft was finished by November, 1981.

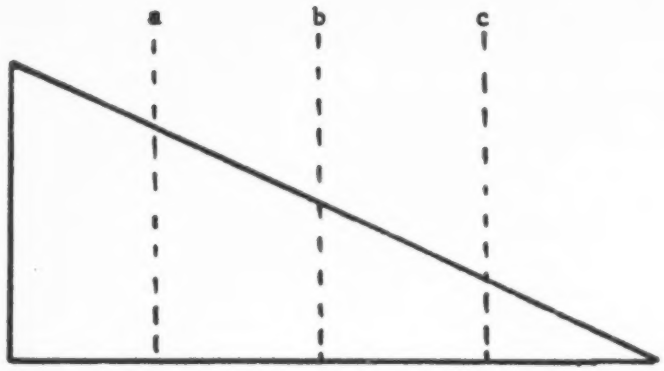
The AEtna Manual of Style, or AEMOS as it was coming to be known, was then given a cooling-off period of several months; parts of it were submitted in draft form to Company writers for their comments, and some editing and revision was done on an informal basis. By spring 1982, work had begun on the final three phases of the manual's development: editing and revision, field testing, and graphic design. Mark O'Brien joined the project, initially as an editorial consultant, to handle these activities. Although we had a fairly good first draft, there was much to be done, as evidenced by Mark's "job description":

> Edit for clarity and conciseness; cut and reorganize material as needed and in consultation with project leader.
>
> Find appropriate examples from insurance-related Company publications.
>
> Develop a cross-referencing and index system.
>
> Coordinate field testing; tabulate responses to user questionnaire; recommend appropriate changes.
>
> Prepare the final version for typesetting; copy edit the manuscript for typography and layout.

EDITING AND REVISION

As work on the manual and our familiarity with its content progressed, we came to view editing and revision as two separate processes. Editing consisted of changes in style, wording, punctuation; in short, the mechanical changes essential to preparing any manuscript for publication. Revision was the more demanding (and subsequently more rewarding) task, for it included rewriting, reorganization, and even rethinking of the presentation of the material; explanation, discussion, and exemplification of style. Throughout the revision process, we referred to an imaginary graph, serving for us as a scale on which we tried to achieve a balance between explanation and exemplification and the amount of discussion needed to "round out" the reader's understanding of a point. The graph, in fact, facilitated our revision because we saw the revision process as a conceptual one, not simply as a series of operations performed on the text. Though we had taken this operational approach

early in the project, revision ultimately became a matter of learning to be better readers of AEMOS. We came to see the book not as a series of chapters, but as an entity which made a cohesive statement about the company's expectations of its employees' written communication. During the revision process, then, we focused our attention on the intent of the text; this put us in the position of having to revise from the reader's perspective, as well as from the perspective of co-authors seeking a perfect manuscript.



As we evaluated each paragraph, we had to determine the conceptual point on the graph at which that particular paragraph (or section in which the paragraph occurred) belonged. Some sections were at point a; punctuation, for example, required enough explanation that consistent users of the manual would eventually internalize rules and no longer need to look them up. In this sense, we realized the manual had an educational function. Other sections were at point c or below; writing numbers as words or digits, for example, requires little explanation. The reader only needs to know standard AEtna practice (numbers ten or below are spelled out; numbers above ten are written in digits): no actual "learning" takes place. In this sense, we realized the manual had a reference function--to standardize mechanics throughout the company.

By the time we finished editing and revising, we had completely rewritten the original draft, and Mark's status had changed from that of a consultant to that of the co-author. We had cut material that was too theoretical or too detailed. We had eliminated rules and explanations that were unnecessary or inappropriate; for example, a section explaining how to construct Roman numerals was cut (we settled for a list of the major Roman numerals without explanation). And, as a result of this process of purposeful rewriting, we had also come to realize that The AEtna Manual of Style had, indeed, developed its own style.

FIELD TESTING

The field testing of the manual provided crucial information during the revision period. Some 225 AEtna employees throughout the United States used AEMOS for three months (July-September 1982); each was asked to send us a "User Response Sheet" every time he consulted the manual. We were interested in knowing if users could find the information they needed and if their questions were answered by the information provided. We received over 300 responses covering all chapters (except one, "Graphs and Tables," which we later dropped from the manual). These were filed by section number; and when we reviewed or revised a particular section of the text, we considered all user response sheets pertaining to that section. The field testing, which we had announced in company-wide publications, was a direct link between the authors and the users. In a way, our audience participated in the creation of the manual.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

During the final stages of manuscript preparation, finding appropriate examples, developing cross-referencing and index systems, and copyediting required our full attention to detail and consistency. Though many examples in the manual came from company publications (the annual report, periodicals, and employee handbooks), we often created examples to illustrate a particular point appropriately. Using cross-references within the text and the subject index at the back of the manual, we built functional links that guide the reader through the potentially intimidating volume of subject matter to the rule or definition needed. Punctuation rules, for example, which must by necessity include terminology such as "dependent clause" or "subordinating conjunction," are listed in the index under the rules themselves; technical or grammatical terms used in the rules are simply cross-referenced to the places in the manual where they are defined or illustrated. In the copyediting stage, we determined what should appear in bold

face, italic, and other display types and decided how best to use typography to support our presentation of the content. All of these activities were directed toward our goal of making AEMOS a practical, easy-to-use handbook for as much of our audience as possible.

PROTOTYPE OF A CLASS PROJECT

As a class project (obviously scaled down) the writing of a style manual could provide valuable experience for the participants. In addition to providing students a chance to learn and exercise reading, writing, and editing skills, a project of this kind would develop planning and conceptual abilities. Having to envisage the finished manual as a product of their own creation would prompt the students to consider their audience, their direct effect on that audience, and, therefore, the responsibility inherent in determining the content of the manual. We outline here classroom approaches to each of our six phases of development.

Needs Assessment. Assign students to analyze their own writing and the writing of classmates; write to other English classes asking for assistance in the project; and interview English teachers, the school newspaper staff, the yearbook staff, and school administrators. This phase might also include a review of course texts, so that the manual produced is not simply a rerun of material already in use.

Content Design. Using input from the needs assessment phase, students could design the content of the manual in a progression of steps. First, focus class discussion on the results of the research and direct the students toward a consensus on the scope and intent of the manual. Second, assign working groups to outline the manual, one or two sections per group, using standard style manuals as checks on the content they design. Third, have the class as a whole review each chapter outline, evluate it, and make suggestions for revision.

Writing. Writing the first draft would again be a team activity. Assign team members, with assistance from the teacher, to make individual assignments of responsibility, due dates, deadlines, and standards. Allowing each team the freedom to operate in its own style (within certain standards) creates a sense of ownership which might otherwise be missing.

Editing and Revision. This phase of the project ties in with the basic objectives of almost any writing course; i.e. sentence and paragraph structure, advanced punctuation, etc. Time the course syllabus to cover these areas in the context of the manual; have students edit and revise

the manual for clarity, conciseness, grammar, and mechanics.

Field Testing. Students should have the opportunity to test their assumptions about the information that belongs in the manual and the usefulness of that information. Depending on the resources available for production, test copies could be distributed to English classes, to the school as a whole, or simply to the original interviewees. If it were not possible to produce large numbers of the manual, one or two copies per English class might suffice.

Design and Production. The details of design and production obviously depend on the resources and budget available for such special projects. There are several ways to approach this, however, especially if the project has the approval of school administrators and becomes, in some way, a school-wide project. Advanced typing classes could be called on to type stencils or ditto masters; the art department and some advanced students could design a cover; printing classes could print a one- or two-color cover; and volunteer students could be called into service to run off copies, collate, and staple. It might also be possible to convince a local business (a town newspaper, a service club, or even the PTO) to underwrite a more elaborate production.

CLOSING NOTE

In a very tangible way, The AEtna Manual of Style has brought the need for good written communications to the attention of all AEtna employees. It has sparked enthusiasm for producing letter-perfect copy in terms of both style and mechanics. A school version of such a project could stimulate the same enthusiasm and could, in an equally tangible way, evoke respect for written communication in the students who participate in it.

Lou Grant Died for Our Sins

James W. Penha

Fresh from my tenure as editor-in-chief of the college paper, I, the enthusiastic first-year teacher, naturally suggested that my eighth-grade honors-class students direct a portion of their English writing toward the publication of a newspaper to be distributed to peers, parents, and my colleagues on the faculty. The journalism lessons and the workshop periods stretched over a couple of months as did research on the lead story selected by our student editors: drug use among the school's population. Surveys were taken, interviews conducted, and investigtions reported, and they were all incorporated into an impressive piece under the banner, "Drug Use Not Unknown at JHS 204."

The first city edition, laid out on ditto stencils and printed in red and blue, hit the streets and the faculty mailboxes at 8:30 on a Monday. Within the hour, I was with the assistant principal who assured me that the principal was impressed with the effort invested in the paper, but could not permit an article on drug use to be disseminated. We had a brief discussion over the journalistic merits and demerits of the article (I agreed with both), but the problem was the subject far more than the style.

Fresh from the academic freedom wars of the sixties, I had never considered censoring the work of my students. Nor did I see my role as that of publisher or even editor. I was teacher, advisor, copyreader (on that I did insist), but I had permitted policy judgments to come from the class. If my teaching was successful, those judgments would be responsible, if not perfect, if not entirely consistent with what I--or a principal--might do or want. The assistant principal thought that a presumptuous error on my part.

My class had some enlightening discussions after the confiscation, but they were darkened by the disappointment. At other schools, later, I decided to have the conversations about censorship first. And I made sure to clarify, with the administration and with my students, that, if we were to print a paper, final editorial call must be sounded by the students. Better not to publish than to teach how to compromise the first amendment.

Now an administrator and teacher at St. John's University, James W. Penha lives and writes--mostly poetry--in New York City.

Writing for Professional Journals: Preservice Training

Philip M. Anderson

There seems to be generally accepted agreement that it is good for classroom teachers of English to publish in professional journals. Writing for professional publication is generally acknowledged to promote clear thinking about educational issues, promote professional growth, aid in inservice communication among teachers, and to develop writing skills. The last is especially important for the English teacher, the one primarily responsible for the teaching of writing in schools. Also important is the experience that comes with writing for real audiences and the effect that has on one's ability to teach writing. While English techers and English education specialists at the college level are becoming concerned with writing for real audiences in composition curricula for elementary and secondary school students, there does not seem to be much attention given to writing for real audiences in the preservice training of English teachers. Teachers who write for real audiences themselves might see the value of writing for real audiences for their students, and might also bring first-hand experience to the task. What follows is a procedure for getting preservice English teachers to write for professional publication and suggestions for finding an audience.

The English teaching methods instructor, by definition, is a person acquainted with the published journals in the field. The methods instructor normally has access to the NCTE journals, at least English Journal, and various local, state, or regional journals, as well as various special journals on composition or ESL, for example. Many of these journals currently use a thematic approach, with themes listed periodically in the journal or on special fliers (English Journal does both). The various types and formats of articles the editor is interested in are also included. NCTE has a complete list of affiliate and national journal editors to whom one can write for information. Boynton/Cook Publisher's Publishing in English Education (1982), edited by Stephen Judy, contains an annotated list of journals in English and related disciplines, as well as numerous articles on writing for publication in various areas of English Education. Jo Bennett's "Getting Your Manuscript Into Print" (English Journal 69:7 (November, 1980), pp. 31-34) contains an annotated list of journals and an excellent discussion of manuscript submission procedures. The resources in the area of writing for professional publication are quite rich at the present time.

The accepted wisdom in submitting manuscripts for publication is that submission to local or state journals

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increases one's chances for publication, but national journals, such as English Journal, have various departments for reviews or other short articles. The opportunities for the writer of professional articles are virtually unlimited (types of opportunities will be discussed below), so lack of opportunity to publish is not a major problem. This is not to imply that anything can be published, but only to suggest that the opportunities for publishing are much greater than aspiring writers realize.

With the information regarding the various journals gathered, the methods instructor can present, or make available, the material to students. The students can write to the editors of the journals, if need be, requesting further information, such as upcoming themes or submission requirements, and can pool the available information. The students should also seek copies of available journals and should read them for content and style. This exercise has the added benefit of making the preservice English teacher aware of professional resources and teacher organizations.

The methods instructor's responsibilities, beyond making the information on journals available, include giving a list of suggested topics and formats, reading the "final" draft and making suggestions, and advising on submission procedures. In the end, this is no more than one does in assigning research papers for methods class anyway. This particular approach also has a "practice what you preach" dimension. If methods instructors wish to impress upon their students the benefits of writing for real audiences as an approach to composition, having their own students write for publication is the best illustration of the salutary effects of the approach.

This assignment can be done over the course of a semester with little difficulty. In some cases, such as a description of a teaching strategy, the student might complete the article during the student teaching semester, so that the student might add some illustrative or anecdotal material from experience. But I do not believe that all good writing about English teaching grows directly out of experience in the classroom. The preservice education of most teachers is the last opportunity for them to be "students" of the discipline, and may be the last time they feel that what they propose or suggest is valuable or original. It takes a certain naive faith that what you are doing might have an impact to be a writer anyway; it is too difficult to write if one thinks it will not do any good. And, of course, many articles written by experienced teachers, though the articles may arise from experience, are not anecdotal descriptions of practice, but discussions of issues affecting the profession or reactions to materials or practices for teaching which are

currently being promoted.

The types of articles most conducive to preservice teachers' writing are those which synthesize the available knowledge or research on a particular subject. In many cases these are nothing more than annotated bibliographies, but are of immense value to the profession. Nothing could be more important than to collect important articles on a particular subject and make that information available to other teachers. Reviews of materials or books for English teaching are also useful for preservice teachers to write about; preservice teachers, in most cases, will have read new books for the profession which teachers in the field do not know about yet. In the same vein, many of the preservice teachers have specialized knowledge of computers and other areas generally absent from the education of teachers currently in the field, and that knowledge could provide excellent articles or reviews.

Journals such as English Journal have departments for which preservice English teachers could write. Currently, English Journal solicits short pieces for its "Our Readers Write" department, which recently has asked for statements on "A contemporary young adult book that kids really like," and "We've all had at least one good teacher who made a difference in our lives. Who was that teacher and what difference did he/she make?" Preservice teachers could contribute on those subjects. English Journal also has review sections for "New Publications for Teachers," "New Publications for Students," "Young Adult Literature," and many other columns. Many state and regional journals have similar types of features. Students are also good at reading research in a particular area and making suggestions for practice. It is also possible to do actual research and report on it, though this type of article is especially difficult for novices; but all research does not have to be formal research, and anecdotal research is publishable in many professional journals. With advanced students who might be working on a particularly difficult area, co-authoring the article with the methods instructor is a possibility. I have co-authored two articles in the last few years with students in the Master of Arts in Teaching program at Brown. I recommend this approach only in those cases where the student is working on an important project which the student would be unable to complete satisfactorily on his/her own and not as a normal procedure.

The chances for publication seem very good today. While space in some journals is less than it once was (as a result of increased costs of printing), the number of journals now being published appears larger than ever. There are fewer "young lions" at the colleges taking up all the space than there once were, and there is a new

commitment to publishing the work of teachers, rather than just professors. The English Journal's open solicitation of the writing of classroom teachers is only one example.

In the final analysis, it is not the publication of the preservice teacher's first article that is the most important aspect of this exercise. Even if this first article is rejected (by many journals), the preservice teacher now knows how to go about getting published when he or she does have something to say. The greatest barrier to teacher publication in professional journals is not the lack of opportunity, but the simple lack of knowledge of how to go about getting published. The exercise promotes teacher professional growth and shows the teacher how to find a forum for his/her thoughts on teaching. Writing for real audiences is only a vague notion for teachers who have not made the effort themselves. The habit needs to be established early, and the knowledge is best emphasized at the preservice level. Today's smaller methods classes make this sort of instruction and guidance feasible; it could serve to make preservice education of teachers more exciting, interesting, and more "real."

PAPERBACK REVIEW

A Small Civil War by John Neufeld.
Fawcett Juniper, 1982. 192 pp. $1.95.

Ava's sister Georgia starts a small civil war when she opposes an incumbent councilman's attempt to gain support for his reelection by spearheading a referendum to decide whether The Grapes of Wrath should be removed from Owanka High School. The motivations and actions are cliché, and the characters are flat. Ava's father spends his time smiling and shugging during Georgia's overwrought tirades. Ava's aloofness and distance from everything that happens are not credible. Equally incredible are the wisdom and sagacity of her older brother who always understands everyone and knows exactly what to do. Predictable subplots are thrown in: two boys pursue Ava--Darryl, the worldly cynical outsider, and Martin, the old faithful; Martin, the councilman's son, moves out of his father's house because of the disagreement they have over the referendum. Rick, another brother, arrives home to announce he wants to drop out of college because it doesn't seem worthwhile; and the school librarian is forced to resign because she is so outspoken in her support of the novel. The novel may be of some value as a means to expose junior high school students to the traditional positions and viewpoints regarding censorship and free selection of texts. However, there is nothing new presented here and the presentation is boring.

Reviewed by Claire Magowan, Danbury Public Schools, Danbury, CT.

A Pragmatic Approach to Advanced Composition

John M. Roderick

Advanced composition is the only writing course beyond freshman English in the curriculum of the University of Hartford's College of Basic Studies (CBS). The College itself is a two year Associate of Arts program that stresses a required core curriculum. The English component consists of a 3 credit course in basic composition and an introduction to literature during the freshman year and a two semester survey of British literature during the sophomore year. Advanced composition may be taken as an alternative to one of the literature courses in a student's second year. The course has been recommended especially to those students who wish to transfer to four year business schools after completing the Basic Studies program.

Typical of many advanced writing courses that developed in the late 60's and early 70's, advanced comp at CBS evolved into one more course of writing about literature. As such, it served the immediate needs of the student in a very limited way. Given the changing demands on CBS students to acquire "practical" skills to carry with them to four year programs or to the work force, the College's English department altered the curriculum of advanced composition to address more pragmatic writing situations. (The core offering remained intact to continue to provide a solid liberal arts foundation upon which to build any specialty or major.)

The first order of business was to decide what kind of "practical" writing experiences a student would need. We talked about sub-titling the course "Writing for the World of Work" but soon remembered that few of our students graduate directly to a "work" situation. The vast majority transfer into their junior year at four year schools. The solution became a writing course that sought to introduce students to the variety of forms they would be encountering during the next two years and beyond.

The philosophy for the very first offering of the "new" advanced composition course at CBS was borrowed from Linda Flowers' Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing. She approaches the writing task on the premise that there is an urgency or need behind most writing efforts: people usually write to convince other people to do something.

The Little Brown Reader was adopted as a tool to deal with students' most immediate challenge: writing papers, essays (including exam essays) and reports for their college

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classes. Here, too, the pragmatic element was emphasized and the writing tasks were reduced to problem solving strategies to convince a reader that a particular hypothesis is valid: the characters in the fiction of Albert Camus do reflect the existential philosophy he espoused elsewhere; soil erosion at beachfront properties has created an alarming imbalance in natural wetlands; a gradual rise in corporate structures is affecting existing tax systems--all might be typical theses that students need to prove in this class or that.

The first units of CBS's modified advanced composition course, then, reflected the kinds of writing that students would be doing immediately in their classes. Because the emphasis was placed on problem solving elements, the natural first concern was to stress the importance of identifying the audience or reader before actual writing ever occurred. The next step was to reduce the subject to a debatable issue so that a logical "proof" could be offered. These two steps, while basic to all good writing, are also among the most difficult to address. Class assignments for this portion of the course are therefore directed not so much on a few finished or completed projects but rather on many beginnings or starts. For example, students might be asked to explain in one paragraph how Walter Mitty's final daydream is different from all those that came before and what the significance of this difference might be.

Instead of assigning a complete critical paper on the work where the student may or may not identify any real purpose or problem to solve for the week's work, three or four concrete exercises in "problem solving strategies," to borrow from Flowers, are practiced per week. When students become comfortable with the approach, a complete analytic assignment is given, i.e. write a paper defending or attacking Judy Syfers' position in "Why I Want a Wife."

These brief pragmatic exercises reinforce the idea that writing style and focus change according to audience identification and intended writer purpose. A favorite assignment is to ask the students to describe a washing machine in three separate paragraphs: one from the point of view of a Maytag repairman talking to his psychiatrist; one from a Sears salesman talking to a prospective buyer; and one from the point of view of a dress sock talking to an athletic sock.

The next unit is an interim unit in preparation of a more personalized kind of writing: the employment application letter (or college transfer application) and the resume.

The ice-breaker here gets students tuned to who they are and the kinds of things that interest them. Assignments range from writing an essay explaining how the clothes they are wearing at that very moment reflect their inner selves to an essay (or list, even) completing the phrase, "I'm the kind of person who..." Following the basic philosophy of Richard Bolles in What Color Is Your Parachute, students are also asked to complete exhaustive lists on such things as: How I Spend My Spare Time; My Most Significant Accomplishments Since the Seventh Grade; What Courses I Like Most in College; What Courses I Like Least; Jobs I Have Had; Responsibilities I Have Had; Skills I Have; My Ideal Job.

Students are then asked to use these lists to write their autobiographies. The autobiographies force students to examine the patterns of their lives to date so that the writing which follows reflects actual circumstances as much as possible. The next group of assignments is vocationally oriented and begins with students clipping out a help wanted ad for their "ideal" job from the Sunday classified section of a major daily newspaper, such as the N.Y. Times. They are then asked to use their former lists to create a resume.

Since most of their accomplishments are usually quite modest, they are also told to study their particular ad carefully and to identify additional qualifications they would need to suit this particular audience. With this combination of data gleaned from past experience and interests and from the needs stated in the job description, each student creates a "mock" resume. (It is stressed that while form and purpose are being emphasized in this particular exercise, truth and accuracy are the additional hallmarks of good resume and employment application writing.)

With audience duly identified, the students' task becomes to convince the prospective employer that they are the ideal candidates for the job. Awareness of reader is reinforced in their application letters. To illustrate concretely that the written word affects behavior and events, a few student letters and resumes are chosen and actual interviews are conducted in class to indicate the direction such exchanges can take depending on the cues supplied in the writing. (This often becomes the most dramatic evidence of the value of the written word for some students.) Writing assignments again immediately follow these interviews. Students are asked to write two letters, one thanking the prospective employer for the interview (taking advantage of the opportunity to parade their qualifications one more time) and the other either accepting or rejecting the job offer, with reader empathy stressed throughout.

The next unit builds on the letter form. Students are asked to list material things they own with which they

have had a problem at one time or another. They are then asked to write a letter of complaint to a manufacturer or distributor to get satisfactory service for the malfunctioning product. They are encouraged to send the letters if the problem persists. (The tendency here is to make unreasonable demands of the reader.) To use writing to get someone else to act is the ultimate challenge of pragmatic writing, and the letter of complaint heightens the immediacy and urgency of such a challenge.

The final unit for advanced composition at CBS follows logically on the letter of complaint. It becomes a journalistic exercise in the ultimate kind of persuasive writing: the editorial. Students are asked to advocate a position they feel strongly about and to follow either an inductive or deductive mode of development while avoiding the common logical fallcies. Typically, students might take stands on issues as topical as abortion or drunk driving or as personal as ideas on noise pollution or grades. Again, they are encouraged to send final drafts to appropriate University or community newspapers.

Advanced composition at the College of Basic Studies is still in transition. Its direction, though, clearly suits the needs of a course whose essential criterion appears to have become "practicality."

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Two Point Zero by Anne Synder and Louis Pelletier.
Signet Vista, 1982. 154 pp. $1.75.

Two Point Zero is a story about cheaters. Some are conspiring to help Eddie maintain a 2.0 average so he can play college football. Kate, the main character, ignores her uncomfortable conscience and hires herself out through a campus ghost-writing service to produce Eddie's English papers. She establishes a relationship with her boss who becomes enraged when he suspects that Kate is cheating on him with Doug, editor of the campus paper. In reality, Doug is cheating on Kate by exposing her in research he is doing for a syndicated writer who is eventually bought off by the campus athetic director. Going home to recover from her assorted trials, Kate discovers that her mother has a new live-in boyfriend; moreover, her mother has stolen a Pucci creation from the shop where she works. Meanwhile, back on the campus, Eddie's English teacher is defying the dean and blowing the whistle on the whole sordid tangle, and Eddie is packing to go home. Kate returns to campus and to Eddie, and suddenly everyone lives happily ever after. A potboiler, Two Point Zero earns a zero.

Reviewed by Mary Anne Zak, Suffield High School, Suffield, CT.

From Martians to Ice Cream: Students' Journal Writing Ideas

Barbara Leonard Warren

"The journal writing assignment for this week..." I had pulled out my folder crammed with over 50 ideas and was beginning to dictate the one to be completed sometime during that week when Debbie interrupted me.

"Oh, no, not another journal assignment," she groaned. "They're so boring."

Since I had prided myself on my idea folder, I was startled.

"Boring?"

"Yeah," said Tony. "Dull, dull, dull."

"Why can't we write about whatever we want?" Steve demanded.

"You may," I said, "on any one of the other four days of the week. This assignment -- like all weekly assignments -- shouldn't take more than one ten-minute block of journal writing time. So what's the problem?"

"I can't relate to your assignments," claimed Cindy. "They sound too teacher-ish." The others nodded their heads in assent.

"I think your problem is that you don't know why you're writing in your journals," I said. "Who is your audience? Who are really writing for?"

"You, of course," answered Greg. "Who else could we be writing for? You're the only one who reads these things."

"Well..." I began.

"No," Kim interrupted, "I'm writing for myself."

A few students gasped in astonishment.

"Oh, I know the teacher reads it," Kim said, "but basically I write what I want."

"Not me," said Kathryn. "I write what I want in my own journal -- my secret one at home, the one I can lock up when I finish. I'd never tell what I really think in this school journal."

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The class was silent for a moment, considering Kathryn's comments. I could see a few nodding in agreement because they also kept personal journals at home. I tried not to show how delighted I was that they were writing outside of class.

Finally, Todd said, "I've been keeping a journal for years as part of a family tradition. Everyone in my family writes every single day and at the end of the year we re-read what we've written, then discuss it with the others. My mother keeps all of our journals in a special place. The one I'm writing in class will be added to that collection on January 1, and then I'll start another one for the next year."

"How old were you when you started writing?" asked Larry.

"About six," Todd said, "but my mother kept journals for all of us -- my five brothers and sisters -- long before that time. You know, those baby-type things. But she actually wrote down what we said and what we did."

A few students cringed as they thought of their own baby books.

"Do you know what you did when you were three?" Todd demanded of the class. "Do you know real things that happened to you when you were four? Do you remember going to the zoo for the first time -- or eating your first ice cream cone?"

The class was silent -- and a little jealous that they didn't have complete records of their own childhoods.

"Listen," I said before they could get too far off track. "I want you to decide on your particular audience. Why are you keeping this journal? Who are you writing for?

"Once you make this decision," I continued, "I'd like you to make up your own weekly assignment."

The class started to protest.

"Surely yours won't be so 'teacher-ish,'" I countered, and since they couldn't refute that, they started to write.

Later that week, I glanced through their journals to see what they had learned and which ideas I could add to my folder. The first few were much too specific for general class work, but they reflected very real teenage problems.

Alma had asked, "How does it feel when you really like a nice cute guy and you can't get him because so many

other girls like him?" Nancy was concerned about friendship. "What would you do," she wrote, "if you had a very close friend, ever since kindergarten, and just when you got to high school, your friendship sinks? How would you feel? What would you do about it? Would you ever become friends again?" In her answer, she admitted she didn't know how to handle the problem and that she was very hurt and angry. She decided I was her audience and should tell her how to cope.

Several students were more interested about visitors from other planets than about teenage difficulties. Ernie wrote, "What would you do if Martians came in giant space ships and began taking human specimens for observation?" His answer -- "I'd run!"

"If you were from outer space," Ricky began, making up still another audience, "how would you describe Earth? Be very specific." More inventive, Chuck asked, "What would you do if a man from Mars came down to your house and told you he was going to take all of your family back to Mars as a circus side show."

Others were concerned with space travel. "What would it be like if we could live on other planets?" Loren wondered. Tammy asked, "If space travel were permitted by the government on a regular basis to anywhere and everywhere, would you go? If so, where would you decide to go?"

Two students, in contrast, wanted to know what their peers liked most about school. Mike's answer was traditional: "You get to pick your own classes and sometimes the teachers are all right." But Melissa was direct when she stated, "I like people!"

Beth, who was upset by the fact that I had invaded her privacy by reading journals on a regular basis, asked, "Do you have a girlfriend/boyfriend or someone you like a lot? If so, who? What is he/she like? If you feel this is none of my business, tell me why."

Her answer was succinct: "I feel this is none of your business because you should not concern yourself with my love life."

A great number of students were more concerned about changes in their physical world. "What would you do," Debbie asked, "if the world ran out of electricity?"

"What would it be like," asked Ruth, "if there weren't any color at all in the world?" Janet questioned, "What would happen if the sun never came out and it was always dark?"

"What would happen," wondered Doug, "if you and a person to whom you weren't talking were the last people on this earth? How long would you go on not talking?"

All of these students were writing directly to their classmates.

Other students wrote about animals but were still interested in responses from their peers.

"If you could be changed into any animal, which one would you choose? Why? How do you feel about this animal?" Karla inquired.

Julie said, "Pretend you are a bird. Tell what kind of bird you are and what you can see if you're a bird that can fly. Also tell why you chose this particular bird."

Many students fantasized about escapism and about a more perfect world.

"If you could be any place in the world this very minute," asked Emily, "where would you be? Why did you choose this special spot?"

"If your biggest dream came true, what would it be like and how would you feel?" asked Ginger. Rhoda wondered, "What would it be like if you didn't have any problems at all?"

Jamie asked, "If you had a whole day with nothing to do and nobody around, what would you do?

Quite a few students were concerned with personal problems. "If your parents left, what would you do?" asked Rusty. I was surprised when I skimmed ahead to his answer: "I would probably go visit my friends because my mom would not like me to stay home alone." He was clearly writing for himself.

Margaret wondered, "If you could spend one weekend with someone alone, just you and that person, who would that person be? What would you do?" Although I thought she was asking this question of her classmates, her answer proved me wrong. "That person would be my Mom," she wrote, "mainly because she's nice and very fun to be with."

Susan wrote, "Have you ever had a day when you felt that everyone was against you? If so, tell how you felt and why."

Pauline was even more introspective: "Do you ever feel all alone inside? Like wanting to scream? And you have a lot of emotions bottled up inside you and you don't know how to react? How did you deal with these emotions?" I knew Pauline was seeking my help.

Glen chose a fanciful subject for his assignment. "If your car could drive by itself," he asked, "what would the world be like?"

Mitch's concern was much more down-to-earth. "Why do people think that $60-jeans are better than $18-ones or other inexpensive brands?" he demanded. I had noticed his "inexpensive brand" when one of his friends pointed to his lack of a designer label.

A few ideas were rather simplistic in view of the rest. Laura asked, "If you were the richest person in the world, what would you do? Where would you go? How would you spend your money?" Caroline wrote, "If you were to come upon a bottle with a genie in it and the genie granted you three wishes, what would they be?" Naomi wanted to know, "What is your favorite day of the week and why?" As I read these questions, I hoped that the girls were writing to audiences of their peers.

Daniel, whose journal had been filled with dire warnings of impending tests and disgruntled teachers, wrote, "Hey, thinking up your own audience and your own weekly assignment is hard work!" Then he surprised me by asking, "What things that people do make you laugh? Be very specific and give lots of examples."

In contrast, Matt wondered, "If you could live in any period of history, which one would you choose? In which country would you be living? Why did you choose that particular period? If you could change something at that time, what would it be? Why?"

"What is the weirdest dream you ever had?" asked Billy. "How did you feel when you woke up?"

Todd, in deference to his family's traditions, wrote, "It is almost the end of the year. Reread your journals and decide how much you have changed during the past year. Were these changes negative? If so, what can you do to improve during the next year? Were the changes positive? If so, how."

By the time I came to Andy's journal, I had a number of ideas about journal audiences, and dozens of items to add to my folder. Proud of his growing knowledge of French, Andy had asked, "What is your favorite food? Can you make it yourself? Are you a connoisseur of this food?" He had answered briefly: "Ice cream. Yes, I can make it myself. And yes, of course, I am a connoisseur."

As I finished reading my students' responses, I felt that I too was a connoisseur -- not of homemade ice cream, but of students' journal writing ideas and audiences.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

What Do You Do When Your Mouth Won't Open? by Susan Beth Pfeffer.
Dell Yearling, 1982. 114 pp. $1.95.

Pfeffer's novel deals with a phobia that children as well as some adults experience, i.e. the fear of public speaking. Reese Nathan is a sociable, warm, above-average seventh grader who has just won the school essay contest with a composition on "What I Like Best About America." Instead of being overjoyed at her win, Reesa is mortified when she learns she must present her essay orally at the countrywide competition in two weeks. Reesa is so panicked that she not only seeks the help of her family and friends but also consults a psychologist, who shows her some calming exercises and recommends a few books. Desperate, Reesa digests everything the doctor recommends. But it is not until her older sister Robby asserts herself that Reesa's confidence is strengthened. Susan Beth Pfeffer does an excellent job of character development. There is a significant change not only in Reesa's behavior but also in her relationship with her older sister. The author's style of revealing just enough to keep you reading but not enough to have you guess the conclusion makes it a truly enjoyable book for junior high students.

Reviewed by Jacquinta D'Amico, Alcott Middle School, Wolcott, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Hatter Fox by Marilyn Harris.
Ballantine, 1983. 273 pp. $2.75.

This is a new edition of a successful novel which Bantam first issued in 1974, and I'm happy to see it back in print. It's a story that not only provides glimpses into the mind of a severely disturbed seventeen-year-old but also helps readers understand some of the problems of being an American Indian in contemporary society, for the main character is a Navajo girl who is confused and torn on the inside and mistreated physically as well as socially on the outside. The story is told from the point of view of Dr. Teague Summer, a young, white physician in New Mexico who becomes interested then obsessed with Hatter's case after she attacks him with a knife. In his efforts to rescure her from the confines of a perverted mental institution as well as from her own self-destructive nature, Dr. Summer falls in love with Hatter, adding another painful dimension to the novel. (For those who have seen the television version of this story, be prepared for a radically different ending). Hatter Fox is a bit more sophisticated than many of the YA books reviewed in this journal, and it deserves serious attention by high school students and teachers who may have missed it during its first appearance.

Reviewed by Don Gallo, CCSU.

Organizing and Publishing a High School Literary Magazine

Leta W. Marks

When The Looking Glass is finally published and on the stands, not everyone in the school is as ebullient as when the football team wins the championship; but, because we encourage and publish diverse voices in an attempt to mirror the multi-cultural composition of our school, we manage to stir some excitement the first day we sell. The audience consists primarily of the student writers themselves, their friends, and their relatives. Many students still wouldn't want to be caught enjoying a literary magazine! However, for the kids who are writing, waiting to see their poem in print is as difficult as waiting for their sixteenth birthday.

What we publish twice a year turns out to be a 7" x 7" booklet in whatever color we choose, containing about forty to fifty pages of poems, drawings, and prose written by students and some daring teachers. The students choose the poems, the color of the cover, the stock, the color and type used inside, and do all of the work. As advisor, I see my role as overseer and nagger, occasionally interfering when I feel strongly or the kids have a problem. They sometimes veto my opinions and most of the time don't need nagging. I am comfortable letting them make decisions and letting them assume the responsibility for the magazine. I find that a literary magazine, the process of producing it, and the product itself, rewards me with a real sense of accomplishment. We are proud of our school magazine. It has received an award from the New England Scholastic Press Association and many accolades from the community. Getting started produced the usual anxieties of any new task, but now that we've met with some success, the process is easier. Here's what we do:

ASSEMBLING STAFF

Early in September is the time to find students who want to write and work on a literary magazine. They are most likely already writing and faithfully keeping journals; these are the kids who will be regular contributors. We receive poems from 30-40 students, fifteen to twenty of whom write regularly. Five of those do most of the work. We don't discourage "joiners" who never seem to come around when there is work to be done but are always present when the yearbook photographer appears.

Leta Marks teaches English to grades 10-12 at Bloomfield High School, Bloomfield, CT, where she advises the literary magazine, The Looking Glass (published twice a year), and coaches tennis. She is the secretary of CCTE and is currently completing a second M.A. in American Studies at Trinity College in Hartford.

A brief announcement in the morning bulletin calling for an after-school meeting brings the kids together for the first time. Some of the students have worked on the staff the previous year. They seem to know who should be editor, so I let them choose. What works, we learned, is to have a junior and a senior as co-editors; this way we retain continuity.

DEADLINES AND DUTIES

At our first meeting, we establish deadlines: the day we close on accepting student writing, the date to finish selecting, the day we go to press after editing, and the date we aim to sell. We don't keep exactly to deadlines, but setting them at least gives us a plan and some degree of order. At that meeting, also, we decide who is going to do some of the work. We always have someone who likes to do posters, arrange the display case, and write announcements. Then we place two boxes, tin letter boxes covered with yellow flowered wallpaper, in the guidance office and in my room. (Once,I think, we had one in the library.)

SOLICITING CONTRIBUTORS

From this time on, we advertise for student writing, encouraging writing in as many ways as possible: we write announcements to be read in English classes and homerooms; we create posters and stick them all over the school; and we place an arrangement of past issues in the display case. Our first year we ran a contest, printing the winning poem on the first page of the magazine and in the local newspaper. We were overwhelmed with poems! Now we have a regular drop-in writing workshop once a week in my room during lunch, which attracts a group of about twelve kids who write, critique each other's writing, and eat. I miss my duty-free lunch break, but since the workshop is student-run, I can participate or not as the spirit moves me! So, for about six weeks we write and collect student writing, reminding students all the time about our deadline. We do ask each English teacher to read a set of instructions about handing in edited, proof-read, legible, and typed (if possible) final drafts. However what we receive sometimes is what every English teacher receives sometimes: illegible, messy, nameless drafts. We are also amazed by some of the moving, honest, well-written pieces of writing we receive.

SELECTING MATERIAL

When the deadline approaches, we give the students one final warning to submit their poems, and then we bring in the boxes for the selecting process. This process takes a few days, because we read each poem or story out loud, reading them with as much sensitivity as we can muster in order to judge fairly and kindly. In an attempt to represent the school's population, we try to include poems which reflect different voices; we often accept a not-so-perfect poem that really expresses something. We do not want to be an elitist publication, so our selection is not based necessarily on what we might think is "best." As we select, we keep three folders: the definites, the maybes, the rejects. We re-read the maybe pile during another session, ending up finally with two folders. We have to limit the number of poems, so we publish only two poems from a single student, even though some kids write many excellent poems.

We also allow the poems to be published anonymously, although we insist on having a name for reference. I made this rule for obvious reasons: to ascertain that the poem was written by one of our students and to confer with that person for editing purposes. (We try to seek permission before even a spelling change.) One year we had some great poems from a "Lucy Blue," who could not be found and who never answered our pleas to identify herself, even though we promised to keep her identity secret. She ended up in my class the next year, finally revealing herself to me! It turned out that she had "mono" and missed our search efforts. Now we have our poems, but there is yet much work to be done.

COMPOSING THE ISSUE

For our first issue, this point is usually the beginning of November. We generally have not received many drawings or pictures, even though we have been advertising for art work as well as poetry and prose. Therefore, we visit the art studios and select some art work that we like or that complements the themes and subjects of the writing. Then we go to work editing and typing, which doesn't sound difficult, but the process always takes longer than the time period allocated. Even with the new computer in the graphics department, which works like a word processor, the student who does this has to learn to use it, find time during the day when it's not being used by classes, and continually correct her copy as the proof readers keep finding additional errors. The copy that she produces must be "camera ready" for the

off-set printing, which will be done by students in the graphics department. This is the second year we have used the new machine, so we have more to learn to streamline the process. When the typing is complete, and the good copy Xeroxed, we have to find a few hours to compose the dummy, an exact replica of the final magazine.

Doing the lay-out and the dummy takes some time and a very large space. We usually work in the art studio, spreading the art work and poems over several large tables. Then we arrange the writing and poems artfully and thematically. We have ready a blank booklet, the same size and with the same number of pages that the finished book will be. Into this we paste the cut out Xeroxed copies of the poems and stories, with directions to the printer about the exact placing on the page. On the pages where the pictures will be placed, we draw a box showing the location of the picture as well as any additional instructions. We must measure the original and figure out the reduction in size, penciling in those directions for the printer. He needs to know, also, whether or not the picture needs a border. This, then, completes the layout procedure. We try to allow three weeks to finish printing, and we try to have the printing done before winter vacation. Unfortunately, we have not always made that deadline; late January has been the real date.

BUDGET

Our work now is done. The printer has it, and we wait, anticipating the day when he tells us it's done. When we published our first issue three years ago, we used a commercial printer who helped with the dummy. We also had some money from the school budget and from a local corporation. Those were the good old days! That summer I had scouted around getting bids from local firms and was shocked at the costs of printing, but it was the only time that we met our deadline. Since that time we have been using the school printing facilities. That takes a bit more time and labor but saves us a fortune since we only have to pay for materials. Last year each issue cost under $200, whereas we spent perhaps four times that figure three years ago when the commercial printer did the work. The extra work that we do is not just worthwhile economically; we also learn about the printing process, can pop in and watch the work, and have to help with the collating and stapling of the pages. We feel more involved in the production.

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

Our final efforts are in selling the magazine in the cafeteria for several days during lunch waves. We keep the cost at fifty cents, even though we think the magazine is worth much more than that, and we run the risk of not breaking even. We think all the work is well worth the effort. The kids love to read their writing and are proud to show it to their family and friends; they are willing

to risk exposing their intimate feelings and chancing some insensitive jeers. Most of the time the kids are supportive of each other's efforts and sensitive to each other's feelings.

Yes, poetry and prose is alive and well and flourishing at Bloomfield High School, because we have students writing for a real audience. The satisfaction of seeing themselves in The Looking Glass has stimulated students to write and has led to the improvement of writing. I am continually astounded by the depth of perception of my student writers, impressed by the quality of writing, and moved by their feelings, and I consider it a joy to work with this gifted group of young people.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Stranger With My Face by Lois Duncan.
Dell, 1982. 235 pp. $2.50.

Laurie Stratton is a seventeen-year-old girl with a unique problem. There seems to be someone on Brighton Island who looks exactly like her! At first, Laurie thinks the apparition is a temporary, silly craziness, but when it appears at a party which she had not attended, it costs Laurie her boyfriend and her one connection with the "in" crowd at school. After being shunned by her former pals, Laurie befriends Helen, a newcomer at school who is knowledgeable about Navajo Indians and their powers of sending their spiritual bodies on "heavenly flights." As the mystery of this second self unravels, Laurie develops a relationship with Jeff, another outcast, discovers that she is adopted and has a twin sister, Lia, and almost loses her life. Stranger With My Face is one of the better supernatural novels for young adults because of Duncan's subtle and gradual unraveling of the solidly plotted mystery, without the violence and gore of similar popular books. Pertinent teenage concerns such as acceptance into cliques, dealing with rejection, coping with the discovery of being adopted, and learning what true friendship means, though not deeply explored in this novel, do provide a context that gives readers a parallel to their own life. Middle school readers should enjoy this sinister novel with its ironic and surprise ending.

Reviewed by Barbara Leigh Laurain, Timothy Edwards School, South Windsor, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Rainbow Jordan by Alice Childress.
Avon Flare, 1982. 128 pp. $2.25.

The title character is a perceptive, gutsy, but lonely ninth grader who has been abandoned frequently by her mother, Kathie, and is being pressured by her boyfriend, Eljay, to extend their relationship into sex. While Kathie is off somewhere with her latest boyfriend trying to find work as a go-go dancer to pay the overdue rent, Rainbow is placed in a foster home where she learns about responsibility, respect, and honesty from Miss Josephine, a hard-working seamstress whose husband has just abandoned her. While the novel focuses on Rainbow's problems, alternative chapters are written from the first-person viewpoints of Kathie and Josephine, enabling the reader to glimpse the adults' concerns, intentions, and delusions of their own lives as well as in their dealings with Rainbow. Childress' latest novel for teenagers surpasses the quality of her earlier highly-praised A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich, and, as a novel about a black adolescent, it is probably the most readable recent book in that category for black or for white students. The black dialect, which should not be difficult for most readers to handle, is flavorful and refreshing.

Reviewed by Don Gallo, CCSU.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Two Blocks Down by Jina Delton.
Signet Vista, 1982. 124 pp. $1.50.

Star is a misfit in the typical world of high school teenagers. New on the block, she is described by her peers as "spacey", although it is she who knows all the right answers in the classroom. Star's life revolves around a room behind an establishment symbolically called The Vagery Bar. In this room, college types help Star feel wanted and loved. But the room and the people in it exist only in the head of this tragic sixteen-year-old. She chooses to accept the world of the insane as a far better place to exist than the meaningless one inhabited by her peers. Star's story slowly unfolds as the reader becomes involved with the trite problems of Leslie and Justina, problems that center around clothing, proms, parties, and boys. This book will be a favorite of those who enjoy mysteries, for Jina Delton begins her novel with a note of suspense that she succeeds in maintaining until the last few pages.

Reviewed by Patricia Juliano, Sheehan High School, Wallingford, CT.

Editing Tips for Real Audience Writing

Ralph L. Corrigan, Jr.

Writing for real audiences--whether it be a letter to a friend, an article for the school or local newspaper, a project involving other classes, or even a letter to a celebrity or an elected official--provides the classroom teacher with an excellent opportunity to introduce basic editing rules that never fail to add vigor and conciseness to tired prose.

Timing is crucial. When the student completes the rough draft, ask the following question: how can the writing be improved? While the teacher stresses the notion that the final draft must be the student's best work, chances are the student will want to meet the teacher half way--because when writing for real audiences, students know someone other than the teacher will be reading their final efforts. It's natural for the student to want to do the best job possible.

The following editing rules (they've been around for a long time, yet seldom are taught in the classroom), are easy to explain, and make for stronger, more vigorous writing. At the very least, after applying the rules, the student knows the final copy is more lively as well as tighter and more specific than the original.

Rule #1: Delete extra words. All good writing is clear and concise. Deleting extra words produces sentences with more impact:

originals	revisions
The characters have lost their distinctiveness as a result of subtle changes in the production.	The characters lost their distinctiveness because of subtle production changes.
It should be noted that these people are qualified members who have devoted many long hours to special training.	Those qualified people devoted many long hours to special training.

Deletion is taught first because the rationale behind the rule is easily grasped. Often, to help make the point that deletion creates tighter, stronger prose, I quote the lines, "Words are like sunbeams; the more they are concentrated, the more they burn." (My apologies for not remembering where I found those lines.)

Ralph Corrigan, a former editor of the Connecticut English Journal, teaches writing at Sacred Heart University in Bridgeport.

Rule #2: Avoid overuse to "to be" verbs. Student writing relies heavily on the lackluster "to be" verb because it slips readily into place, allowing the writer to avoid thinking about a more specific word. In fact, "is/are/was/were" verbs constitute as much as 80% of the verbs students use. Converting "to be" forms to action verbs improves sentences dramatically.

originals	revisions
Last year an effort was made to limit smoking in public places, but it was unsuccessful.	Last year's effort to limit smoking in public places failed.
A teacher's caring relationship with students is important to the students' success.	A caring teacher motivates student success.

Students should circle all "to be" forms in their rough drafts, then try to convert them into verbs with more impact. They should also be wary of overusing any of the following colorless verbs:

cause	have	result	seem
do	make	serve	like
give	occur	achieve	feel

In fact, any verb occurring more than five times in a sampling of a hundred verbs suggests a potential problem.

Rule #3: Avoid vague language. Student writers should not use a general word in place of the more exact word. The list below contains the most frequent offenders:

amount	degree	order	rate
area	fact	part	role
aspect	field	type	state
basis	level	process	subject

originals	revisions
The area Jim is most proficient in is writing.	Jim excels in writing.
The amount of effort needed in the subject of mathematics is phenomenal.	The effort needed in mathematics is phenomenal. or Mathematics demands a phenomenal effort.

Rule #4: Vary sentence lengths and structures. Students often write sentences of similar lengths (usually 10 to 16 words), creating a choppy, sing-song effect. When revising, students need to work with different sentence lengths; in fact, they should count the number of words in each sentence and adjust where possible.

original	revision
1961 was the year dance crazes had changed from previous years. A rock 'n roll star started and popularized a dance called the twist. The twist was initiated in the manner of a person drying his back with a towel. It usually was done with couples.	In 1961 the dance crazes changed. A rock 'n roll star started and popularized the twist, a dance for couples that imitated people drying their backs with towels.

Sometimes combining sentences achieves variety; other times different sentence structures (simple, compound complex, periodic) create smooth-flowing prose.

Rule #5: Vary the beginnings of sentences. For lively writing, ask students to vary sentence beginnings. In most cases, students write far too many sentences starting with subject openers and frequently use twice as many noun openers as pronouns. As a rule of thumb, roughly 50% of the sentences should begin with subjects (noun and pronoun openers remain about the same in professional writing). Prepositional phrases, adverbs, conjunctions, and dependent clauses make up the other 50%.

Students writing for real audiences realize that their writing must stand by itself and convey the intended message as clearly and concisely as possible. By applying the few rules listed above, at least the students can be sure they are moving their writing in the right direction. When the student says, "This is the best I can do," and knows that is the case, something special has taken place in that writing class. In fact, the student has begun to recognize what the writing process is all about.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Counter Play by Anne Snyder and Louis Pelletier.
Signet Vista, 1982. 166 pp. $2.25.

Brad Stevens, quarterback of Fort Hanning High's undefeated eleven, is an Army brat who really believes in old-fashioned patriotism and wants to go to West Point. He has never been in one school long enough to establish close friendships. But now at last he has a friend, Alex Prager--a superb football player, a mathematician, a distinguished pianist, a backpacking companion, and a homosexual. When Alex's homosexuality becomes widely known, Alex tries to protect Brad by abandoning him. But Brad sees that Alex has more integrity than many others whom he has trusted, and in the end he refuses to let their friendship dissolve. The story is well paced, and while it avoids explicit sex, it raises important questions. But it is not altogether convincing. The despotic Bible-quoting coach, who wants to dismiss Alex; the congressman who changes his mind about nominating Brad for West Point; even Major Stevens, who gives orders to his son as he would to a private, are hardly believable stereotypes with thoughtless, predictable reactions to homosexuality. The high school kids, especially the girls, are more fully drawn and contribute to some tender and humorous scenes. But the most unsettling thing about the book is that Alex's homosexuality is like a label stuck on him. It is never convincing. While this novel doesn't quite succeed, it is not a bad read for senior high school students.

Reviewed by Richard Zahner, Bunnell High School, Stratford, CT.

I Read It in the Local Paper

Mary Ann Link

Local newspapers, those whose aim it is to serve a small town or a particular neighborhood of a city, are often willing and eager to publish well-written pieces. In two different settings, I have watched a project which began as a short series of articles on a specific topic develop into a regular feature in the local paper.

As I was completing the coursework for my doctorate, my advisor suggested that I offer my services gratuitously to the community newspaper as their education writer. I wrote a five-part article on reading difficulties experienced by teenagers and submitted the article to the paper as a sample of my work. At the conclusion of the fifth piece, I invited readers' questions and comments. From the responses, I developed another series of articles.

Later, I suggested that a good student writer prepare a similar set of articles. The topic this time was the transition from elementary school to junior high, told from the vantage point of one who had survived the ordeal. The series ran in August when tension peaks for those students ready to change schools. As before, a final article responded to questions from readers.

In another town, the community was caught in the junior high versus middle school controversy when I proposed a series of relevant articles for the local newspaper. In this set I tried to deal rationally with issues, such as the pros and cons of interscholastic athletics for middle level students, which were the subjects of heated debates not only at school board meetings but also over dinner in homes throughout our school district. This series culminated in a number of interviews with middle school experts, with school principals from other towns, and with local people representing different age groups and view points.

My suggestion is not for yet aother "Dear Abby" column or for another teen gossip column. People are almost always interested in education in general and in their schools in particular. Student writers have a ready audience in the community; students also have access to the sources of information about their schools. The teacher who supervises such a project need only verify the authenticity of students' information and assure the local newspaper of quality writing. Further, the distinct advantage of short series of articles is that these series can be sporadic and directed toward timely issues and need not take the burdensome quality of a weekly column.

Dr. Mary Ann Link taught English in Illinois secondary schools thirteen years before becoming Coordinator of Secondary Education at Valparaiso University. She is currently on part time leave while attending law school.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

An X-Rated Romance by Tina Sunshine.
Avon Flare, 1982. 140 pp. $1.95.

For those who complain that young adult novels frequently deal with the more depressing aspects of life such as disillusionment, divorce, and death, an author with the appropriate name of Sunshine has written a zany, fun-filled story about love in early adolescence. Finding that there are no "older" boys in school, thirteen-year-old Sara Libshutz--barely into braces and barely out of undershirts--falls in love with blond, blue-eyed Mr. Garfield, her English teacher. Emily Josephsen, her best friend, discovering Sara's dilemma, uses her vivid imagination and contrives several seduction situations to ensnare the unsuspecting Mr. Garfield. Emily's plans begin to go awry when Sara loses from her person one of the strategically placed ping-pong balls. Recounting the story from Emily's point of view, Sunshine vividly depicts the sexual stirrings of the budding adolescent. Her characters are, however, for the most part, stereotypes with their development sacrificed to the unlikely chain of events that comprise the plot. Even though it is not a particularly memorable book, it humorously records the escapades of an adolescent who, with the help of her friend, pursues an older man. Middle school girls looking for light reading will enjoy An X-Rated Romance, for there is nothing "x-rated" in it.

Reviewed by Ann Keating, Bristol Central High School, Bristol, CT.

Writing for Peers

Mary Hills Kuck

"Is it supposed to be written for teenagers, or should it be boring, like a book?" This question of style arose when writing began for our end-of-the-year project in the Regional Young Parents Program.

I had an English class of ten young women in grades 10-12, with reading levels ranging from fourth to above twelfth grade. It was May, and many of them were already young mothers, preparing to re-enter public school in the fall. We needed a project that could span a wide range of skills, combat spring restlessness, and sum up the year. A writing project can succeed in a class of mixed achievements, because each student can work at her own level of syntax and vocabulary, improving individual problems, adding new words, and mastering structures as they are needed for personal expression. But what topic could capture the enthusiasm of this diverse group? The one thing they all shared, their pregnancy, suggested itself immediately. Why not write a handbook of advice to teenagers entering the program next year?

The proposal was met with an enthusiasm I had not expected. Students began immediately to brainstorm about topics that really had to be included: how to tell your parents, decisions to be made, maternity fashions, etc. After listing these, each chose three she would like to write about. It did not matter that some were duplicated; two perspectives on a topic are often helpful. A student proposed a title--"Everything You Need to Know About Pregnancy but Didn't Want To Find Out"--and the work began.

Writing was done in class, where I could supervise and make editing suggestions without having to mark up the papers. Few objected to rewriting to a perfect (or almost perfect) copy, because they knew that the typist would not edit, but simply copy their work. (I had originally planned to have a student type the first draft of the booklet, but the pressure of time caused me to do it myself.) An audience of critical fellow teens was the motivation for both mechanical exactness and a lively style.

As students completed their sections of the booklet at different rates, I assigned them new tasks: one designed the cover, another arranged the typed articles on pages in the order in which they would appear in the booklet. Our teens read their peers' writing eagerly, and were delighted to see their own work in typed copy.

Mary Hills Kuck teaches at Quinnipiac College in Hamden, South Central Community College in New Haven, and at Area Cooperative Educational Services.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Football Dreams by David Guy.
Signet Vista, 1982. 275 pp. $2.25.

The perennial difficulty of growing into young adulthood is the theme of Football Dreams. Told in retrospect and set in a private high school during the 1950s, the narrator reminisces about the experiences (agonies and raptures) of his four years at Arnold Academy. A day student, Dan faces typical conflicts confronting young males. In this case, they are brought into focus using an identification with athletics. With great sacrifice and hard work (detailed very well), Dan, who is not a "natural" football player, gradually gains skill and self-confidence as a lineman. The story flows well through Guy's intermixing of friends (sense of loyalty and social distinctions), football (self-realization), dating (desires and anxieties), and family crisis (Dad dies of illness prior to Dan's senior year). The characters who people the novel represent a mixture of "shades" rather than absolute extremes--a welcome touch. Central to Dan's development is the gradual and completed awareness of his motivation to succeed in football. After playing four years--scrub through varsity starter--he discovers that he has played for the wrong reason, forcing a critical hesitation in the final moment of his last game. Football Dreams is an agreeable remembrance, combining the sadness and humor of life realistically and truthfully.

Reviewed by Edgar Flynn, H.C. Wilcox Regional Vocational Technical School, Meriden, CT.

Audiences for Student Poetry

Barbara Meyers

It is from my sister Debbie that I learned a child's joy in sharing her poetry. She was an enthusiastic and impish eight at the time. On this particular winter evening, she sat crosslegged by the fire, totally absorbed in her dreams and a few sheets of notebook paper. She popped up anxiously when she had finished to share with her family her first poems.

The short works were spontaneous and vulnerable, like the songs of small birds. Each poem focused on a subject she knew well, blossoming from the world of reality to that of imagination. For example, the hearth fire became a springboard to dream:

> As I sit by the fire as
> it crackles and pops as the wood
> burns and turns pitch black
> I wonder to myself as the
> fire crackles and pops if I should
> dream a dream or take a nap
> as the fire crackles and pops.

The orchard next door the scene of a delicious fall moment:

> As I sit under a
> blooming tree an apple falls
> from an unsteady branch
> a sweet apple as sweet as
> you a juicy apple that
> no one has ever touched but me.

Her goldfish, Brownie, the victim of a whimsical mistake:

> I had a fish named
> Brownie but someone
> misread the title
> and ate him.

Her approach to poetry was interesting for several reasons. For one, she looked to her own experience for inspiration. How difficult it can sometimes be to encourage older poetry students to write about what they really know instead of what seems lofty or profound to them! Secondly, her child's mind easily opened the gate to the world of fantasy, a gate not yet locked by the logic that seems to be age's constant companion. And lastly, she used repetition quite naturally, feeling no obligation to force rhymes.

Barbara Meyers teaches English at Bunnell High School in Stratford, CT.

Teaching students to avoid sacrificing meaning and technique to rhyme is a painstaking process once they decide poetry and rhyme are synonymous.

But what was most moving that winter night was not my sister's poetic technique; it was the expression of openness and wonder on her face as she read. She had offered a little of her child's soul and met with a very responsive audience.

My sister made me realize that it is natural for children to want to share their writing. But at the same time I understood the power of the audience. Had anyone laughed in the wrong place or corrected a spelling error, I doubt that she would have been so eager to write on her own for anyone again. At once I was aware of the great possibilities for students in sharing their poetry and the great responsibility of teaching them to be thoughtful audiences (and to deal with audiences who are not). For to share your poetry is to share a secret part of yourself--and an audience must understand this. As Yeats wrote, "I have spread my dreams under your feet; Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."

THE ELDERLY AS AN AUDIENCE FOR CHILDREN'S POETRY

Shortly after my sister composed her first poetry, I worked with third graders in a church school class who were writing and illustrating poems to decorate the walls of a convalescent home. I used Kenneth Koch's book Wishes, Lies, and Dreams, a wonderful source of ideas for writing poetry with children that is alive with color, vision, and caring. The children with whom I worked were instinctively poetic, but I think the fact that their poetry was to be a gift made their writing even more special. They also read their poems aloud, an important part of training the ear to hear poetry.

I must admit that I was concerned about how the residents of the convalescent home would respond to the student poets. Fortunately, a wonderful nurse coordinated our day there. She selected several of the more able residents to meet the children first. This group was alert and eager to meet the children and to listen to what they had written. Later, she took the children to share their poetry with bed-ridden patients. She talked to the children first, explaining to them that even though some of the patients might not be able to respond outwardly, inside they had many feelings that they would like to express if they could.

There were many warm moments that day--and a few smiles on some faces that hadn't smiled in a long while. The children felt very proud and competent because their poetry

had been well received. But, most importantly, they wanted to write again the next week: they had experienced the joy of sharing their poetry with a caring audience and were anxious to do so again.

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AS AN AUDIENCE FOR CHILDREN'S POETRY

Although I am not an elementary school teacher, I have always enjoyed working with younger children. As a result, I was very enthusiastic last year when my high school poetry class was asked to judge a fourth grade poetry contest. I understood from the fourth grade teacher that her students were very excited. Several prizes were to be awarded to the winners, and the fourth graders were impressed that high school poetry students would be judging the contest. The poetry students in turn felt very important to be charged with an assignment which recognized their poetic expertise.

Prior to the judging, the poetry students discussed the importance of being a serious audience for the children's poetry. Emphasis was placed on trying to understand a poet's point of view which is different from our own and especially on reserving comments, suggestions, and criticisms for poems as literary works, never for poets as poeple.

On the day of the judging, the members of the class gave each entry a careful reading, and although occasionally amused, the students were consistently respectful in their evaluations. There was no immediate agreement on the winners, which prompted a lively debate that forced students to define and defend what they considered the qualities of a successful poem. My students learned that being a responsible audience is hard work.

The poetry contest is a fine activity which can certainly be adapted in many ways, perhaps with one high school class judging for another or for a junior high class. However, if my poetry class were to judge a contest again, I would encourage more personal contact between the senior high and elementary school students. In the future, I would invite the elementary children to read their poems to the poetry class. Hearing a poet read his work reminds us of a poem's humanity and makes the critic a more sensitive audience.

CLASSROOM STUDENTS AS AUDIENCES FOR EACH OTHER: A CLASS POETRY MAGAZINE

In my teaching career, I have worked on several creative writing magazines, but the first poetry magazine which I advised as a student teacher remains the most poignant. The students who compiled it were members of a mini-course in poetry offered at an inner city school. Suffice to

say that the class was divided along ethnic lines. In an effort to reach students on a more personal basis, many teachers had adopted the approach of individualized instruction. I had also adopted this approach, so the students in the poetry class worked independently for the most part, selecting the poets they wanted to read from long option sheets. I wanted very much for the class to share its work, to feel unified, at least for the brief time we were a class.

Using the class poetry magazine as a means of drawing the class together was the idea of a very perceptive department chairman. Together, we organized the magazines along the most non-threatening lines possible. Each student recopied and submitted what he considered to be his three best poems, signing with a pen name and stapling the three together. The pen name was significant in several ways. First, it allowed the poet anonymity, protecting him from being judged as a person rather than a poet. Secondly, it forced students to be objective audiences for each other's work. Essentially, though, the pen names were fun: they evoked some of the most genuine laughter we had heard in the class.

On the day of the judging, the class formed a large sharing circle. Each student received a set of the three stapled entries and was instructed to sign the back of the poem he liked the best of the set and explain in a sentence or two why this was his choice. Then he passed the stapled set of three entries on to the next person who repeated the procedure. When everyone in the class had read all the entries and made selections, the poems were returned to their poets who tallied the numer of signatures on the back of each poem in order to determine which one would become part of the poetry magazine. Once the poet had his poem, he signed his real name and turned it over to the art and layout editors and typists. A girl from the class who also worked in the office volunteered to run off the magazine on the ditto machine when it was ready to go to press.

The day the poetry magazine came back from the office was a proud one for my poetry students. It's always a proud moment when you see something you have written in print--even if the print is purple ditto! But that magazine was so much more than it appeared to be. For several of my students it represented the first time they had communicated with each other; for others the first time they had communicated positively. I believe the desire to share poetry had been there, but the obstacles to sharing were tremendous. Rather than asking students to overcome the obstacles, we asked them to step aside for a few minutes, take a break from building walls, and listen to the sounds of the human voice. They must have liked the sounds of

their voices because they elected to send copies of the poetry magazine to everyone from the principal to the members of my other senior English class.

My experience has shown that students take more care in their writing when they know somneone besides the teacher is going to read it. They worry about legibility, punctuation, spelling, and usage. They also give more serious concern to content, seeking advice and suggestions from other classmates as well as the teacher. Knowing that an audience will read or listen to their poetry adds a certain measure of drama and depth to the writing experience. It is also as important to teach students to be considerate audiences as it is to find considerate audiences for their writing. If they want to be understood, they must learn to understand.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

On the Ropes by Otto R. Salassi.
Bantam, 1982. 241 pp. $1.95.

Why do so many recent books for teens involve the death of a parent? In this case, the dead is eleven-year-old Squint's mother. She's a religious zealot whose unmourned departure is designed to create an opening for the return of her run-away husband, wrestling and pool impresario Caludius Gains. Con-man Gains saves the family homestead for Squint and his sister by starting a wrestling arena in the front yard. He stocks the place with six wrestlers, including both sexes, and a performing bear. The villain, a visiting wrestler named the Angel of Sorrow, is foiled by a series of stratagems designed by Salassi to give readers an insider's view of professional wrestling qua racket. The chicanery, examined in depth, takes precedence over the story. The characters, replete with comic gadgetry such as masks, helmets, steel hook prostheses, polka dot trunks, etc., become mere comic stereotypes. The plot question becomes one of which wrestling manager can out-cheat the other. Although the book does seem to smile rather too indulgently on the con-artist's cheap trickery, any of your students who feel a need to learn about petty criminality in professional wrestling will find On the Ropes an enjoyably comic expose.

Reviewed by Gil Hunt, Manchester High School, Manchester, CT.